

Week ending January 1 1949

Every Thursday Threepence

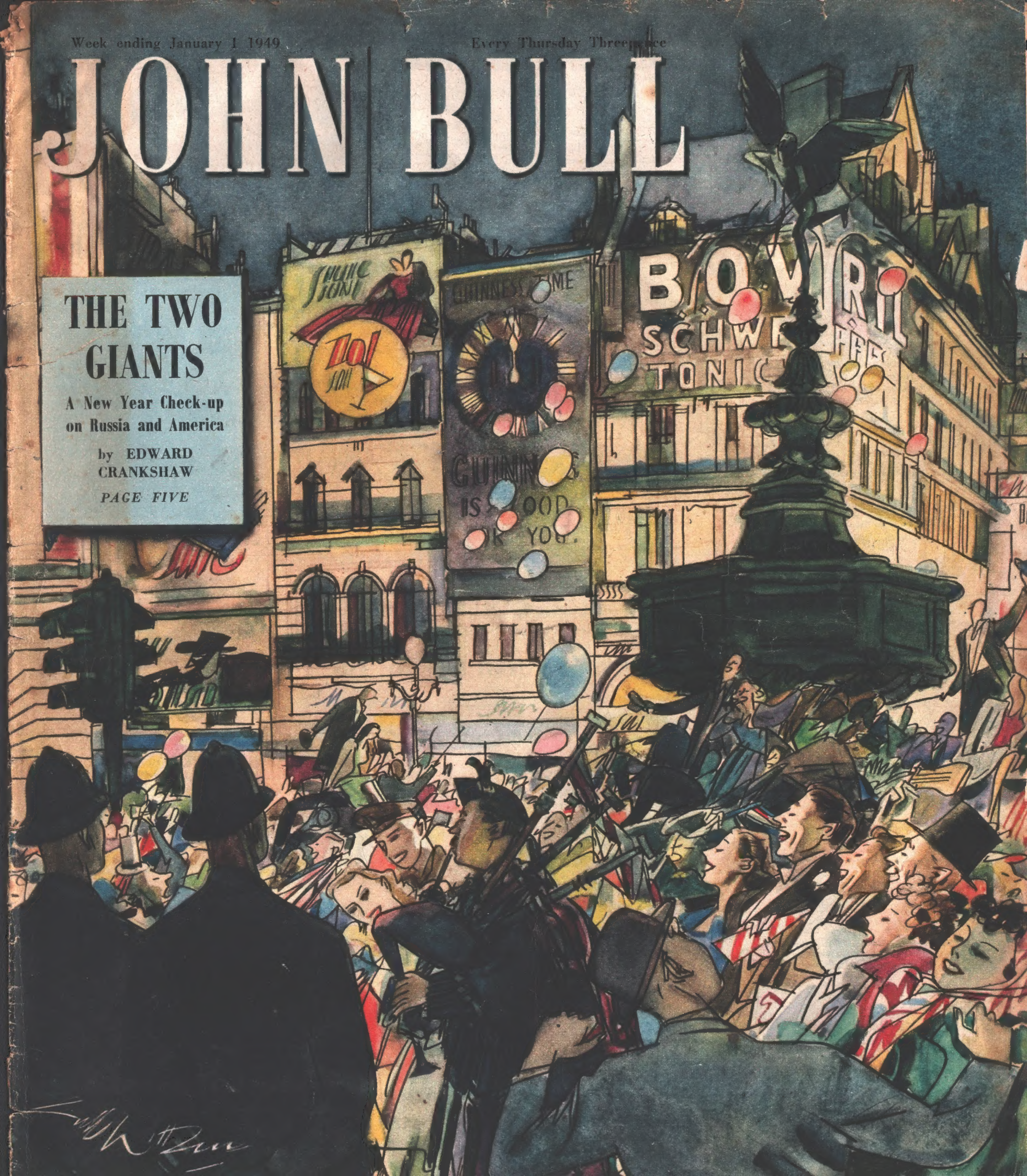
# JOHN BULL

## THE TWO GIANTS

A New Year Check-up  
on Russia and America

by EDWARD  
CRANKSHAW

PAGE FIVE





## Don't neglect his COUGH!

Children are more prone to coughs and colds during our trying winter months and a neglected cough may lead to more serious bronchial troubles in future years.

**Lobelline** is your safeguard this winter.

At the first sign of a cough in the family, whether it is a child or a grown-up, you can rely upon Lobelline for immediate relief. Purely herbal, quick in action, Lobelline stops the tickle, cuts the phlegm, soothes the chest, restores normal breathing and ensures a good night's sleep. Children love taking Lobelline, it has such a nice flavour.

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## INDIGESTION

... cause and remedy

The food you eat may be divided into three classes, carbohydrates, proteins and roughage. Carbohydrates, such as bread and potatoes, form the bulk of our food and should be very thoroughly masticated, because the juices necessary for their digestion are contained in the saliva with which these foods should be well mixed before being swallowed. The reason you should not drink with meals is that any fluid taken with meals reduces the strength of the digestive power of the saliva. The digestive juices for carbohydrates must be alkaline, that is why Moorland Indigestion Tablets which are alkaline, slowly dissolved in the mouth help to digest bread, pastry and potatoes before they reach the stomach. Moorland Indigestion Tablets, are famous the world over for relieving indigestion, heartburn, acidity and all stomach troubles. Take two Moorland Tablets after meals and eat what you like and enjoy it. Sold by all chemists, 1/8d., also in 10d. packets (including tax).

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**DRAUGHTS ARE THIEVES.** Jennifer Jane's handy husband is a hound for draughts. With strips of felt he's stopped every crack round windows and doors. He's had the carpets up and caulked the floor boards.



**LAGGING? IT'S AS GOOD AS GOLD!** If you knew what it costs to heat a tank of water you'd never let the heat escape into the air. Lagging the hot tank and pipes is easy, it costs next to nothing and I can still air my clothes in the cupboard.



**"I'M NOT MEAN: I'M CAREFUL."** Fuel sense doesn't mean shivers and cold baths and washing up in tepid water. It means using your head. It means filling the kettle no fuller than you need; thinking twice before you use the oven.



**IT'S FREE.** Jennifer Jane didn't entirely teach herself to save money by fuel sense. Do as she did and write for the handy free book called "65 Easy Ways of Saving Money" to Information Branch (Dept. 36b), Ministry of Fuel and Power, Millbank, London, S.W. 1



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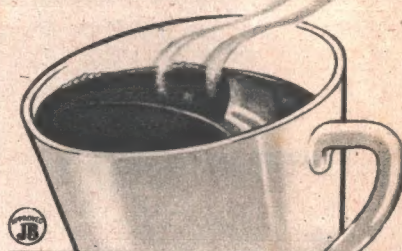


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## New Year of Hope

THE NEW YEAR STARTS a lot better than we feared it might.

We are at peace. Marshall Aid is assured and makes the future of Western Europe far less hazardous.

Housing, farming and industrial production are going ahead. We've got a bit more to eat.

A Happy New Year, therefore, to Attlee and Cripps and their colleagues. This will be the last full year of the present Parliament. Several members of the Government have assured us that they intend it to be one of the busiest years yet in our drive for national recovery. Good luck to them in their efforts.

A Happy New Year to President Truman—his first as elected President of the United States. May he and all others who battle for social justice and a square deal for the common man prosper in 1949.

A Happy and Peaceful New Year to the Russians—even including Mr. Vyshinsky, who now blames Britain and America for the last war. May he think straighter in 1949!

## Work for the J.P.C.s

NOTHING IS MORE VITAL to the nation's production effort in this new year than new ideas. One way to get them is through joint production committees and works councils.

Yet these valuable bodies are often shunned by employers and misunderstood by workers.

Obstinate industrialists of the old type dislike the committees because they fear that some of their own absolute control over their enterprises may be taken away.

Obstructive workers either regard J.P.C.s as just another kind of negotiating machinery or as platforms for political outbursts.

Both are wrong. A J.P.C. should be concerned with one thing only—increasing production.

If a man has a grievance about wages or conditions, his trade union exists to speak for him.

If he wants to preach a political gospel, he is free to do so—outside the factory and outside the J.P.C.

Let the established J.P.C.s get on with advancing the nation's essential work—and let others be started throughout the nine-tenths of industry which is still waiting for them.

## Paying for Pensions

WHILE WE SYMPATHIZE sincerely with the claims of old age pensioners to generous treatment, we agree with Mr. Griffiths, the Minister of National Insurance, that they cannot be especially favoured in comparison with the sick, the unemployed and widowed mothers of families.

To reduce the pensionable age for a man from sixty-five to sixty would greatly increase the proportion of pensioners in the population and reduce the number of workers who, by their contributions to the National Insurance scheme, have to foot the

bill. Obviously, the under-sixties would have to pay more—whether in the form of taxation or in higher contributions—to meet an extra cost of £500,000,000 a year.

It would be more sensible to organize jobs for the older people. At present many industries operate a system of compulsory retirement, either at sixty or sixty-five. Those age-limits may have to go.

Surely it is better to let the older men and women who are still fit work on a little longer—which most of them will gladly do—than to pile fresh burdens on the younger folk and the national exchequer?

Perhaps compulsory retirement itself is out of date?

## Goodbye to "Witchcraft"

IN THE NEW YEAR the Witchcraft Act is to be altered to distinguish between genuine religious spiritualists and sharks who batten on credulity.

This distinction is long overdue. The law on the subject is as out of date as its name. It is monstrously silly that the word "witchcraft" should still be on the Statute Book.

The old Act should be repealed and forgotten and a completely new one passed, which might be called, for example, the Religion (Fraudulent Practices) Act.

Only thus can the end of a dark world of superstition be publicly recognized and a fresh step towards enlightenment be taken.

Genuine spiritualist belief is just as respectable and deserves just as much freedom as any other creed. It should be freed from the perpetual threat of police court proceedings.

And at the same time a real drive should be made to clear out the phoney mediums and other practitioners of conjuring and false comfort who prey on the bereaved, the unhappy and the gullible.

## Lucky Dentists

FIRST THE DOCTORS, now the dentists.

The National Health Service has in some ways had a raw deal from the very people who should most fervently support it.

Dentists are now up in arms because the Health Minister proposes to halve whatever they earn over £4,200 a year. He thinks—and many people agree—that they are getting too much.

Yet before the Health Service started they were moaning because they feared getting too little.

Is not £4,200 a reasonably ample income for any professional man? Ask the suffering patient in the dentist's chair what he thinks about it!

No, the dentists are doing very well, and there is not any reason why they should make unprecedentedly high incomes out of a scheme which their organizations have bitterly opposed from the start.

Our only complaint against the Minister of Health is that he may have left too generous a margin of affluence for the lucky dentists.

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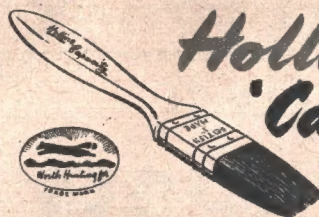
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"— Meaning? ..."

"Why, don't you know? It's the smile Mum says I've always got when I clean my teeth twice a day."



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\* 'Milk of Magnesia' is the trade mark of Phillips' preparation of magnesia.

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makes the family ask for  
more.

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**Scott's** **PORAGE** **Oats**



**How  
to have  
more fat  
for Winter cooking**

This is the season to enjoy warming, filling foods, such as steamed or boiled puddings. But these *do* mean more fat for cooking. However, it is surprising how much you can add to your store of cooking fat by collecting the "odds and ends" and preparing them in the following ways.

### Clarified fat

Save all fat from the tops of stews, soups, gravy etc. and the dripping from roasting, frying and grilling. This needs to be clarified or cleaned before it is used for cakes, pastry or frying, but may be used as it is for savoury pastry and sandwich spreads.

- 1 Put the fat in a saucepan without the lid and cover with water.
- 2 Bring slowly to the boil and put into a clean basin. If a large quantity is

being clarified, strain the fat through fine muslin.

3 Leave until cold, when the fat will form a hard lid on top of the water and any impurities will be left in the water or on the bottom of the fat.

4 Lift off the cake of fat, turn upside down and scrape the bottom clean and heat in a saucepan slowly to drive off any remaining water. When fat ceases to bubble, it means the water has evaporated. If water is left in, the fat will not keep and will splutter when used for frying.

### Rendering down fat

Trim surplus fat from cooked or uncooked meat. *Method 1.* Cut fat into small pieces, put in a pan, cover with cold water and boil. Skim well. Boil until nearly all the water has evaporated. Cook very slowly, stirring occasionally to prevent fat from sticking. When pieces look dried up and

sink to the bottom, allow fat to cool slightly, then strain. *Method 2.* When the oven is on. Cut fat in small pieces and place in a pan in a slow oven until the fat has melted and there are only crisp brown pieces of tissue left. Strain the fat into a clean basin.



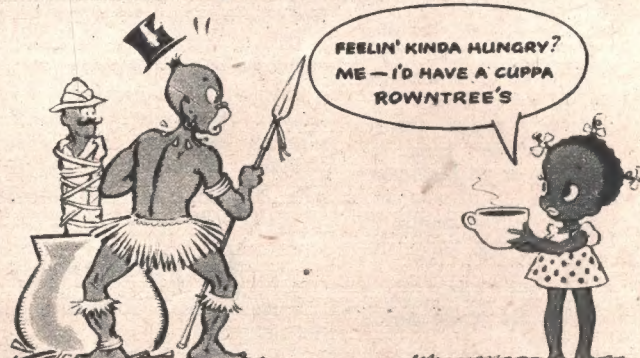
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### EVERYBODY'S SAYING—

Have you got  
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Russian show of strength in Vienna: Red Imperialism, say Americans



U.S. show of strength in Tokyo: Capitalist Imperialism, say Russians

# TWO GIANTS IN THE RING

On the Left, Russia; on the Right, America. How do they compare and can they be kept in their corners? One New Year consolation is that others, especially the British, can still influence events

**E**VERYBODY REALIZES that American policy in the international sphere is at present influenced overwhelmingly by Russia—by fear of Russia, that is to say. But comparatively few seem to realize that Russian policy is even more closely influenced by fear of America.

In other words, just as it is impossible to understand what the Americans are doing unless one takes the Russians into account, so it is equally impossible to understand what the Russians are doing without taking the Americans into account.

And this is simply another way of saying that each country is relentlessly bringing out the worst in the other: Russia's fear of America and America's fear of Russia are driving those two great countries to exaggerate the very qualities which nourish each other's fear and give shape and substance to it.

## Makes Us Jumpy

We, like the Americans, are so hypnotized by the sheer immensity of Russia, the size of her population, the wealth of her unused resources, that we think of her as being very much stronger than she really is, or can possibly hope to be for many years to come. This makes us, and even more the Americans, unnecessarily jumpy in our responses and reactions to Russian actions.

But the leaders of the Soviet Union

by **EDWARD CRANKSHAW**

are all too vividly aware of certain aspects of their country which most of us ignore.

They are aware of the emptiness of those vast spaces, of the backwardness of the majority of the 200,000,000 Soviet citizens scattered over those spaces, of the size and complexity of the task of realizing the hidden resources, industrial and agricultural.

They know that the output of the average worker in America greatly exceeds the output of the average worker in the Soviet Union—not only because of mechanization, but also because of a higher level of intelligence and skill.

They know that the tremendous distances which separate from each other the new industrial centres are bridged by a quite inadequate system of railways and roads. They know that, in spite of the striking rise in the industrial population, the backbone of Russia remains, and must for long remain, the slow and conservative peasant.

They know that for many years to come a very high proportion of Soviet industrial production must be diverted to making more machines to make machines—in a word to capital expansion, at the expense of the standard of living.

For, just as we in Britain have had since the war to put the greater part of our energies into making

goods we badly need ourselves in order to sell them to foreigners for money to buy food, so for many years in Russia the people have had to put the greater part of their energies into making heavy machinery as a basis for the industrial expansion which only later on may give them the goods which make life easy.

## Food on Doorstep

America, on the other hand, is so well supplied with her own food that she does not have to buy it abroad with exports, and her technical equipment is already so complete that she can afford to devote a great part of it to building bigger and shinier motor cars and all the consumable paraphernalia which goes with what we still misguidedly call a high standard of living.

As I have said, the men in the Kremlin are vividly aware of the material backwardness of Russia as compared with America.

They are more than vividly aware. They are obsessed by it.

For material backwardness spells military weakness.

Backwardness in steel production may not be very important when it comes to living a full life; our ancestors managed to do that without motor cars and gadgets, just as the Russians do today.

But backwardness in steel pro-

duction is extremely important when it comes to war.

The extent of this comparative backwardness of Russia, in spite of the giant strides she has taken since the revolution, is shown by some simple figures.

America is now producing some 85,000,000 tons of steel a year; the U.S.S.R. last year produced 18,000,000 tons. America is now producing 250,000,000 tons of oil a year; the U.S.S.R. last year produced less than 30,000,000 tons.

And this in spite of the fact that Russia has nearly 200,000,000 people compared with America's 130,000,000. Clearly Russia has a great deal of leeway to make up before she can equal American production.

## How War Hit Russia

Of course, she is going ahead at a great pace. Had it not been for the war those figures would have been much higher. Indeed, in her production of steel and iron and coal and grain and oil, Russia had reached her present level by 1940, half way through the third Five Year Plan.

The war, with its immense waste of material and manpower, and, above all, with its unthinkable devastation of the Western part of Russia, including the Ukraine, which used to be both the granary and the workshop of the whole great country, lowered her productivity by half.

Nobody can imagine the damage suffered by the Russians. But if you



Muscovites go shopping. "The Kremlin is obsessed by material backwardness of Russia compared with America"

remember that 25,000,000 people were made homeless by the war—one in every seven or eight Russians, or half the total population of our own islands—it gives you some idea of the scale.

And the fact that she has after three years of peace, and by putting heavy industry and agriculture first and the comfort of the people nowhere, managed to recover her prewar level in the absolute essentials—though still lagging far behind in everything else, including housing—gives an idea of the determination behind the Government's fight against material backwardness.

Even so, the discrepancy between Russia and America will be enormous for many years to come.

The farthest the Russians have so far seen ahead was in a speech of Stalin's, made in 1946, when he gave as the target for the next fifteen or twenty years the raising of steel production to 60,000,000 tons, of oil production to 60,000,000 tons, and of coal production to 500,000,000 tons.

But even if this level is achieved by 1960 or 1965, the U.S.S.R. will still be far behind the America of today. So far behind that there is only one possible justification for Stalin's observation that when those figures were reached, and only then, Russia would be secure: namely his own undeclared intention of incorporating into Russian production the whole of the production of East Europe.

This he is now doing, bringing the steel and iron and coal of Poland and Czechoslovakia, as well as the oil of Rumania, into the Soviet economy and, at the same time, to the best of his ability reducing the productivity of Germany and France and, indeed, of Great Britain herself.

But the Kremlin is not afraid of America only because of her overwhelming material strength.

When all is said and done, we in

Great Britain are also weak compared with America; but we do not go about in fear of American attack. The immense power of America simply lends substance to a conviction that sooner or later Communist Russia and Capitalist America must meet in titanic conflict.

This conviction derives from the Marxist doctrine that every system contains the seeds of its own downfall and must give place to its opposite.

The system now about to collapse is, of course, Capitalism, which is supposed to give place to the dictatorship of the proletariat. But part of the Marxist idea is that the old order will defend itself to the bitter end and that therefore its end will be violent.

Today for Capitalism we have to read America, and for the victorious proletariat Russia.

#### No Direct Challenge

The Moscow Communists have not the faintest intention of challenging America to a direct fight, which is the last thing they are ready for, and the very idea of which is in direct opposition to all their strategy—a strategy of sapping and undermining the enemy until his whole fortress crumbles at a push.

The Moscow Communists would be quite happy to plod away at this strategy for an indefinite number of years; but unfortunately it is one of their beliefs that in a convulsive effort to maintain itself Capitalism must break out into an imperialistic drive for world markets to prop up its economy and avert internal collapse.

They believe that America has reached this phase now, and that the lively interest shown by America in the Pacific, in China, Japan, the Mediterranean, and the Arctic regions is, together with E.R.P. (the so-called Marshall Plan), nothing at all but a tremendous imperialistic drive to sub-

ordinate to American economy the whole world outside the Soviet sphere of influence—and then to smash down the Iron Curtain itself in order to dominate Eastern Europe and strike at the U.S.S.R. as the only possible rival for world markets.

The tragedy is that, in making her dispositions to defend herself against this theoretical threat, almost everything the Soviet Union does serves to turn the theory into practice.

For America today is doing precisely these things. She is setting up air and naval bases all over the world. She is rebuilding Japanese economy as fast as she can. She is building up the arsenal of the Ruhr. She is using Marshall Aid to make Europe a going concern as a bastion against the East.

And she is doing all these things, just as the Moscow theoreticians prophesied, because of her fear of Russia—a fear stimulated out of all proportion and kept constantly alive by the very actions taken by the Communists to defend themselves against the American expansionism which they themselves are precipitating.

This is as absurd and childish a situation as it is possible to imagine.

It is a suicidal farce played out between two rapidly expanding and prolific nations each ruled by an idea. For just as to the Russians Communism is not merely one system among others, suitable for a certain place and a certain time but not suitable for all places and all times, so to the Americans the idea of free enterprise has also become a dogma, a quasi-divine law which cannot be questioned.

That situation is not merely farcical—for we are all caught up in this struggle between the giants which, pursued to its logical end, must lead to universal conflagration.

This, of course, is a gross oversimplification of the struggle which is

going to shadow all our lives throughout the coming year.

It is futile to argue about which came first, the hen or the egg. But in speaking of the essentially defensive character of both Soviet and American expansionism, we have to remember that the ultimate aim of the Kremlin is and must be world revolution—the triumph of Communism everywhere, that is to say, an end which all Communists everywhere are expected to do everything in their power to hasten by retarding as best they may the stabilizing of non-Communist societies.

The fact that Communists may make short-term alliances with other parties as a tactical manoeuvre mustn't be allowed to obscure this final aim.

#### Hunger for Markets

At the same time, although the great American drive towards E.R.P. and the checking of Communism everywhere is greatly stimulated by a straightforward fear of Soviet intentions, there is no denying that even without Communism the American system at its present stage of development would be crying out for new markets for American goods on American terms, and would express itself in an attempt to dominate large areas of the world with American capital.

Both Russia and America, thus, have a bit of the truth about each other.

But it is not the whole truth. And although they are each doing their level best to turn part truths into whole truths, the picture perhaps is not so gloomy as it seems.

In human affairs, logic does not always triumph, and in spite of their hugeness and their dominating positions Russia and America do not yet make up the whole world.

The rest of us, above all the British Empire, still have a part to play; and, in checking this megalomaniac race between two Powers each convinced that it has discovered the secret of history, it may well prove a decisive part.



EDWARD CRANKSHAW was with the British Military Mission to Moscow during the war and revisited Russia in 1947. Books he has written include "Russia and Britain." Another, just completed, deals with the subject of this JOHN BULL article — Russo-American rivalry.

# GOING TO COURT ON THE CHEAP

by a *BARRISTER-AT-LAW*

There seems one major snag in the otherwise excellent plan to lower the cost of the Law

**A**NYTHING WHICH TENDS to diminish the cost of obtaining justice must be good, provided, of course, that by cheapening the means you do not lose the very advantages which you are seeking to obtain.

For in law, as in most other walks of life, money counts; you cannot buy first-class materials at third-class prices.

Thus neither today nor tomorrow can you or I hope to obtain the services in court of Sir Walter Monckton or Mr. D. N. Pritt or Sir Valentine Holmes for the same fee as that of some young barrister who was called to the Bar a couple of years ago.

It may be that, for some special cause, any of these counsel might lend his services for a nominal fee or for nothing—the Bar is at least as generous in this respect as any other body of men—but it is mere common sense that no ordinary litigant can expect to brief counsel at the top of the ladder as easily and as cheaply as their less able, less celebrated rivals.

So, when we consider the prospects of the new Legal Aid Bill, which received a Second Reading in the Commons before the Christmas recess, we must retain a sense of proportion. To expect too much of it is to court disillusion.

The new Bill aims to remove the spectre of financial ruin from that large class of litigants—voluntary or involuntary—who fear at present to invoke satisfactory professional aid. It will not, of course, pay your legal debts, but it will very greatly reduce the costs of collecting them.

## According to Income

What are its principal points? First, to increase the number of citizens who may claim State-aided assistance in their legal troubles. The Bill provides that anybody with a "disposable" income of not more than £8 a week and a "disposable" capital of not more than £500 may claim such advantages to some extent.

"Disposable" means what is left after essential outgoings—income tax, rent and rates, dependants' allowances, and so on—have been met. So a disposable income of £8 a week probably means a gross income of about double.

Suppose you are in this class and you want to bring or defend an action in the courts, you will first obtain a certificate from a National Assistance Board official and then place your troubles before a Legal Advice Centre, where for a fee of half-a-crown a solicitor will tell you whether you have a case fit to present to the court.

If he thinks you have, you will choose a solicitor from a panel list, and a barrister from another panel of names to argue your case in court. And then

things will go forward in the usual manner.

If your "disposable" annual income is £150 or less and your capital negligible, you will not have to risk a farthing of your own. But, if your circumstances are better than this, you will be liable for a proportion of the ensuing expenses.

Should you win your case, it seems that you will not pay anything; but, should you lose, you will be liable to pay whatever proportion of the other side's costs the court thinks reasonable, having regard to your means.

## The Legal Luxuries

All this, however, will not apply to divorce cases (where you will not usually have the right to select your solicitor and counsel, though the expenses will be greatly reduced) or to such legal luxuries as actions for breach of promise, libel and slander, or enticement.

So far as criminal defences are concerned, the present system of Poor Prisoners' Defence free legal aid is to be made easier, largely by encouraging magistrates to grant more certificates by removing the cost from the local ratepayers on to the shoulders of the general taxpayers.

All this will confer appreciable benefits on certain litigants and defendants who at present are cruelly hampered by the high cost of the law. But it is not going to solve all our difficulties, or even most of them.

Some of the disadvantages can be foreseen by noting what often happens now when a defendant is granted a free Legal Aid certificate. He is given the services of a solicitor, but that solicitor is likely today to be overworked and understaffed, if he is any good at all. Consequently he can afford to devote only a moderate amount of time to the preparation of such a client's case.

And counsel who appear for a defendant under the existing rules receive so small a fee—three guineas—for conducting a case which may take a week's time in court that it is only natural that they prefer to accept a well-paid brief in preference, if they have the choice. If, on the other hand, the barrister is a newcomer to the Bar or has never built up a practice there, he gladly accepts the P.P.D. (as it is called), but his client may not always be equally satisfied.

## Ruins Whole Case

I have seen too many cases where a lack of experience or lack of skill has wickedly prejudiced a defendant's case in the courts and, what is worse, has ruined his chances of a successful appeal to the Court of Criminal Appeal.

It is quite true that the new scheme provides (except in criminal cases) that you, the intending litigant, may select



A case to fight? Advice Centres will give panel list of lawyers

your own counsel. But no barrister can be in two places at once and you may find that, when your case comes on, the one you've chosen is already engaged elsewhere. So you will have to put up with a substitute.

Moreover, you are certainly not going to be able to select very well-known counsel to represent you, for the simple reason that they are not going to put their names on the panel. They will not be interested to fight cases in the county courts for a few guineas.

## Barristers' Earnings

Now it is no use grumbling at the high fees which successful barristers charge for court appearances. For every hundred-guinea brief they receive, they have to spend countless hours of research and work on pleadings and opinions which bring them in a couple of guineas. Only one suit in a dozen ever comes into court; the rest are settled beforehand.

Of the 10,000 barristers whose names are printed in the Law List, you may take it that not more than two or three hundred make a net income of more than £2,000 a year, while many more than half probably earn less than £600 a year gross. The main everyday work in the courts is done by a couple of thousand men earning between £1,000 and £2,000 a year, and it is they who will determine the success or failure of the new scheme.

If they have had to refuse many well-paid private briefs in order to represent State-aided litigants under the new plan, they may find their incomes so much reduced that they simply cannot afford any longer to join in working it.

If, on the other hand, they find their financial position not too seriously affected, and keep their names on the panel, they may be deluged with work they cannot hope to carry out in person.

It is a great mistake to imagine that a barrister can be easily compared with, say, a doctor. If I break my arm

and no unusual complication occurs, young Doctor X will doubtless use precisely the same methods to heal it as doddering Doctor Z.

But, if I have a tricky law case (not to speak of a defence which has to be put to a jury), I should be mad to suppose that Barrister A and Barrister B and Barrister C will use the same words or carry the same weight with the judge or jury before whom I come.

Clarity, skill in examination and cross-examination, resourcefulness, even legal knowledge—all these qualities are present in different degrees in different men; and, though a very large number of trials are not determined by the skill or clumsiness of counsel, a certain proportion are. The new Bill will not clear up this difficulty.

How is the defection from the panel—because of financial loss—of many of those couple of thousand men who do the main everyday work in the courts to be prevented?

It may well be that some plan will have to be devised by which barristers can apply for extra remuneration based on figures showing average loss of earnings through taking part.

## Can be Remedied

Unless something of the sort is worked out, the main purpose of the scheme may be defeated. The ordinary litigant or defendant with not more than £8 a week "disposable income" may find in practice that if his case is to be handled to his satisfaction he will have to go outside the scheme and face expenditure he cannot afford.

But that lies with the future. Any faults which may develop in the working out of the new measures—which represent so radical a departure from established practice—will soon become apparent, and they can be set right by an amending Bill in three or four years' time.

8 **A**S SOON AS Mr. and Mrs. Woods crossed the garish threshold of The Silver Moon, it was obvious that they weren't in the least used to such places.

They hesitated nervously in the foyer. Mrs. Woods clung timidly to her husband's arm, and Mr. Woods fiddled with his hat in an embarrassed sort of way.

The cloakroom girl looked at them with that kind of scorn with which those who serve the rich are apt to regard the poor. She may have noted that the left leg of Mr. Woods's trousers had a double crease in it, as though they had been pressed under the mattress. Certainly she noted Mrs. Woods's shapeless, hopelessly out-of-date felt hat, her threadbare blue serge costume, her cheap stockings, and her cracked black patent-leather handbag.

She wondered how these two had managed to get by Bert. The answer seemed to be that Bert must have slipped round to the kitchens and wasn't there to get by.

The cloakroom girl also wondered briefly whether she ought to do anything about Mr. and Mrs. Woods herself. She shrugged her pretty shoulders. Let Mr. Joe Larman have 'em chucked out if he wanted to. Why should she do his dirty work for him?

Mr. and Mrs. Woods were now moving uncertainly towards the steps leading down to the night club floor.

"Leave your hat, sir?"

"Oh—er, yes."

Mr. and Mrs. Woods left Mr. Woods's hat, and then they once more advanced upon the glamorous scene which lay at the foot of the steps. And it so happened that no one turned them back with a polite statement that the place was full.

François, the head waiter, was busy with a party of film people, and Joe Larman, the proprietor, was busy in his office. Nor were Mr. and Mrs. Woods observed even by the guests, for Louise was singing, and all eyes were upon her. Louise, with her South American suppleness and her really very ordinary voice, appealed at any rate to the eye.

As they approached the spread of tables, all of which seemed to be occupied, Mr. and Mrs. Woods dithered a little. Then Mr. Woods firmly took his wife's arm and led her towards the little bar over on the right. There, after a brief hesitation, Mrs. Woods permitted her husband to help her up on to a high stool with slim, chromium-plated legs and a padded red leather top.

From behind the bar, Harry had already noticed them as they came towards him, and was still wondering how they'd got in. Now he moved in their direction. The polite smile with which he favoured most of his customers was quite absent from his face. By way of inquiry he permitted himself to raise his eyebrows, but that was all.

Mr. Woods seemed very ill at ease.

"Er—d'you think I could have a bitter, please? And have you got any ginger wine?"

"We haven't got either," Harry said coldly. "This isn't a saloon-bar."

Mr. Woods's confusion deepened.

"Oh—I'm sorry. Er—what can we have, then?"

Harry did not answer. He waved a hand in the direction of the line of bottles which coruscated from the shelves behind him.

"Can we have gin?" Mr. Woods asked.

Harry began to move away.

"—And orange?" Mr. Woods begged.

Harry served them, and then, while Mr. and Mrs. Woods sipped their drinks and Mrs. Woods giggled and Mr. Woods fumbled with his collar, Harry took stock of them. He knew the woman's type all right—he'd been married to one of them. And the man? It wasn't difficult to place him either. Although his hands had been



"Won it," said Woods from the bar. "Fifty thousand quid." "Delighted to hear it," said Joe

# MOONSHINE

by JOHN DAVIES

ILLUSTRATED BY RONALD SEARLE

For the hard-working, homely-looking couple, the weekend was a daring

adventure. But not quite the kind the night club manager expected

scrubbed till they were raw-red, they were ingrained with grime.

Harry felt he ought to know what these two were doing in The Silver Moon. They weren't Joe Larman's type of customer. Joe might be grateful if someone tipped him the wink, so that he could have them gently eased out.

Harry came back along the bar opposite Mr. and Mrs. Woods, and asked, tight-lipped: "On holiday?"

"That's right," said Mr. Woods, obviously grateful for this mark of attention. "On holiday. Sort of, anyway."

Mrs. Woods put a hand on her husband's arm, as though warning him.

"Come far?" Harry asked.

"Quite a way. From Cornwall. From Penzance, as a matter of fact."

Mrs. Woods had not withdrawn her warning hand, but it was of no avail. Her husband, who appeared to be bursting with some secret which he simply had to impart to somebody, said recklessly:

"Matter of fact, we had a bit o' luck." At this Mrs. Woods took on a

very worried look, indeed. Harry noted it, and asked, with more interest than he might have done: "You did? What sort of luck?"

"A bit o' luck with the pools."

Harry rounded his lips into an "Oh!" of understanding, and nodded.

"I see! On the spree, eh? Win much?"

"Fifty thousand quid," said Mr. Woods shakily.

"How much?"

"Fifty thousand quid," Mr. Woods repeated.

"You must be the feller I read about in the paper last week, then?"

"That's right—it was in all the papers," said Mr. Woods.

Mrs. Woods dropped her hand in defeat.

"Oh—I *did* ask you to be careful, dear!" she said tremulously.

Mr. Woods turned to her.

"But, love—it's all right! We mustn't get to thinking that just because we've had a bit o' luck, everyone's going to try

to swindle us out of it! Anyway, it isn't as though I'd got the money on me."

But Mrs. Woods wasn't easily reassured. Her husband did his best, and finally got her to agree to having another drink. But when he turned to order the drinks, Harry wasn't there.

In Joe's office, Harry was saying:

"You may think grass is green, but wait till you see these two!"

"O.K.," Joe said. "Get back to the bar, and I'll go round the front. And if anything comes of it, I won't forget. You know me."

Joe got up from his desk, selected and lit a new cigar, chose a fresh buttonhole from the bowl of rosebuds on the desk top, and left his office. He made his way quickly through the club and approached the bar from the customers' side. He stopped just behind Mr. and Mrs. Woods and said affably:

"Good evening, sir—good evening, madam. I don't think we've had the pleasure of your company before?"

Mr. Woods leaped on his stool as

though he'd suddenly been shot in the seat of his trousers, and turned to face Joe.

"Mr. Larman, sir!" Harry called from the other side of the bar. "You ought to hear about these folks' luck!"

Joe frowned disapprovingly at Harry, and then turned to Mr. and Mrs. Woods with an obsequiousness which was in itself an apology for Harry's familiarity.

"You've been lucky?" he asked softly.

"Yes," said Mr. Woods, rather defiantly ignoring his wife's obvious anxiety.

"A pretty good slice of it, too, if I may say so."

"May I ask in what direction?"

"Pools," said Mr. Woods. Then, even more defiantly, he added: "Won't a packet, too! Fifty thousand quid!"

Joe smiled. He did not seem particularly impressed by the amount. But he said very pleasantly:

"I'm delighted to hear it! I always like to see people lucky—and happy. And if you're the one, you have a very good chance of being the other, eh?"

He laughed genially, and then, turning, beckoned to François. The head waiter flowed smoothly over.

"Oh, François—give these friends of mine the best table you have, will you?"

"Oui, monsieur."

Joe turned to Mr. and Mrs. Woods.

"François here will look after you. You've just time to be seated and order before the floor show starts, and perhaps afterwards you would join me for a drink in my office? Just a little celebration for two lucky people, eh?"

NEITHER Mr. Woods nor his wife seemed able to answer at once. They were quite overwhelmed. Then Mr. Woods managed to say: "Very good of you, I'm sure."

Joe nodded to François. François projected a slim white hand in the direction of the supper floor. "Madame? Monsieur?"

Mr. and Mrs. Woods followed François as though in a daze.

When the lights went up again after the floor show, Joe left his office and made his way to Mr. and Mrs. Woods's table.

"And now—how about our little celebration?" he asked. "A little champagne, eh? Come along!"

He turned to lead the way back to his office. Mr. Woods rose and assisted his wife to her feet. With his arm encouragingly through hers, they followed Joe. On the threshold of Joe's office, Mrs. Woods stopped involuntarily, and cried:

"Ooh! Isn't it lovely!"

If it wasn't exactly lovely, it was certainly luxurious. The room was softly carpeted and discreetly lit. There were large, very comfortable armchairs.

"Sit down! Sit down!" Joe exclaimed, beaming. "And now for a drink."

He straight away opened the bottle which had been put on ice on his desk. Then when he came over to Mrs. Woods with a silver tray, she took one of the tall-stemmed glasses from it and eyed the pale contents doubtfully.

"Cigarette?" asked Joe, proffering an ornate silver casket.

"Oh, no! No, thank you!"

"I'm afraid the missus is a bit old-fashioned," Mr. Woods said apologetically.

"And a very good thing!" Joe declared. "I don't hold with these modern women. But how about you, sir? You'll have a cigar, won't you?"

"No, thanks—I'll have a flag, if you don't mind."

"But, of course—"

Joe held out the casket to Mr. Woods, but he shook his head and said:

"I'll—I'll roll me own, if it's all the same to you."

"By all means! And now, let's drink to your good fortune."

They drank. Then Joe dropped easily

Continued on next page

# He has the kennelside manner

by DENNIS HOLMAN

... and very necessary, too, for this doctor's patients sometimes bite and scratch when they're under the weather

WHEN ALLEN BAIN parks his car in a Walthamstow side street, and walks to the door of the People's Dispensary For Sick Animals, he usually finds a neat little queue overflowing from the waiting-room inside.

The owners are an odd assortment of ages and types, but odder still are the pets, led or carried to the morning sick parade.

Beyond the door marked "Surgery," Bain finds Mr. Crisp, a white-coated figure, in the act of taking the temperature of a terrier pup shivering on the table. Next door, in the tiny operating theatre, Miss Wright, a pretty young assistant technical officer, is doctoring a comatose tom kitten. "It's done painlessly," Bain explains.

Between them, Mr. Crisp and Miss Wright treated 1,015 fresh cases last month, in addition to destroying about 350 unwanted dogs and cats. The P.D.S.A. handles an average of 1,000,000 cases a year in seventy-four fixed dispensaries, twelve caravan dispensaries, three stray-dogs' homes, five hospitals, with eleven ambulances working day and night.

All treatment is free.

The commonest complaints of Walthamstow's weebegone procession are distemper, a kind of doggy influenza; mange; canker; eczema; and septic wounds. There is also a sprinkling of cats with fish bones in their throats and sick hens with distended crops.

"Take an average day," Bain says, turning over the pages of the register. In red ink are the fresh cases. Black ink is for old ones. "Here's a mongrel who had three teeth extracted under anaesthetic and the remainder scraped; a guinea pig brought in after being mauled by a cat. . . ."

## Sanatorium, Too

Bain's job is supervising P.D.S.A. dispensaries in part of the London area. When X-ray or hospital is recommended, animals are moved to the sanatorium at Ilford. Here major operations can be performed.

Mr. L. White is in charge of the dog ward—two rows of cages with temperature charts hooked at the top of each cage, and an assortment of collies, cockers, scotties, who bark in chorus every time the door opens. Some of them wear a hood like a Victorian bonnet to prevent a damaged ear or snout from being scratched.

"This is Sally," White pats a golden retriever. Sally cocks an ear. She had a telescoped bowel turned gangrenous, which White had cut and joined together again. Both Sally and owner are doing famously.

Technical officers get a kick out of treating animals. "Animals can't tell you what's wrong with them," White says. "They won't be able to thank you, but there isn't a better reward than watching a desperate case recover."

As patients, animals are not over-fond of treatment, and after one experience of a dispensary are hardly likely to walk up and take their medicine like soldiers; they need a firm hand leading them; but once on the table their resistance seems to end.

Occasionally a dog gets tough; then it has to be handled with a muzzle bandage. Bain's wrists and knuckles are lined with scratches, and he has the scars of a few vicious bites.

Some dogs, like difficult children, are inclined to act up with owners present. They are usually as good as gold when



Diagnosis: distemper. Allen Bain examines spaniel. Not all behave so well

left alone with the technical officer. A dog will pick up and reflect the temperament of the owner as easily as a child will copy the accent of its playmates; so it isn't really difficult to trace the origin of a bad-tempered dog's temper.

Few people who take their pets to P.D.S.A. dispensaries are the sort who pamper them, and Bain has personally never been asked to perform operations like trimming ears to beautify them for a show, or debarking dogs to make them acceptable in a block of flats.

Dogs can be debarked by an operation in which the vocal chords are cut. It was quite a rage a few years ago in America.

He strongly disapproves of the practice of shortening tails. "It's a silly fashion," he tells owners who might ask to have a terrier done. "It means cutting through bone, nerve and artery, and with older pups it is really painful."

Owners who fuss over their pets, spoil them, over-feed them, are, in Bain's experience, just as likely to prove insincere.

## Old Man and the Cat

Genuine devotion is more like that of one old man who was first in the queue every morning for the five weeks it took to heal his cat's septic wound. During that time the cat was under anaesthetic ten times. Bain merely treated the wound. It was the old man's nursing that pulled the animal through.

The kindest work Bain has to do is the hardest—that of putting unwanted animals to sleep. Last year the total number destroyed by the P.D.S.A. was 170,051. "It goes against the grain," he says, "but it is better than leaving the animals to roam the streets."

For dogs they use the humane killer which fires a bolt into the brain. Cats are put into tin containers with a damp swab of chloroform.

Contractors remove the bodies every

day for cremation in a furnace; but five guineas can secure a funeral for a pet, with a coffin to measure and a grave in the Pets' Cemetery at the sanatorium.

The sexton is Bill Speller, aged sixty-nine, who has been tending graves since the first customer was buried there seventeen years ago. Now there are 126 graves, four feet down, some containing as many as four animals. Speller remembers burying them all.

In the corner of the cemetery is a bird bath, the headstone of a rabbit called Sammy, who died at the ripe age of fifteen; and Bill tells of the owner who buried a dog and reserved the plot next to it for the dog's pup.

## Flies to Pet's Grave

There is a Frenchwoman who flies over from Paris every month just to stand for a few silent moments before the grave which bears the legend: "Sergeant Jip."

Bain advises owners to treat a puppy like a child. It should be fed at regular intervals four or five times a day. As the pup gets older, increase the quantity of food and cut the number of meals until, as an adult, it only needs to be fed once or twice a day.

Diet should consist of meat or fish, with a portion of green vegetables chopped and mixed up. It is hard to beat boiled shoots of stinging nettles. Puppies need a biscuit meal or stale brown bread broken up and mixed with the meat and greens. Avoid potatoes and starchy foods. Sweets, chocolates and cake are positively unsuitable for dogs.

A pup doesn't need much exercise, and if it is put outside at regular intervals it won't need any severe punishment before it is house-trained.

Haphazard doses of worming medicine won't do a pup any good. If you think your puppy has worms, get professional advice, says Bain. And at a P.D.S.A. dispensary it won't cost a penny.

MOONSHINE: from previous page  
into a chair and proceeded to get down to business.

"That's a nice little bit of pocket money you've won, eh?" he said. "And have you thought what you're going to do with it?"

Mr. Woods suddenly looked worried.

"No. That's the trouble. You see, I haven't had much experience—"

Joe leaned forward.

"It's a funny thing," he said musingly, "but it so happens that I could put you on to a good thing, if you'd be interested."

Mrs. Woods drew in her breath sharply. Her husband avoided her eye, and asked:

"What sort of thing?"

"Well," said Joe, "I'm thinking of starting another place like this. It's a venture that'll need about forty thousand. I'm prepared to put up twenty thousand myself—and that's a guarantee of good faith in itself, isn't it?—and I've a gentleman in mind who will put in another ten thousand. As soon as I can contact someone who will put in the other ten thousand, the thing can get going. What d'you say, sir?"

"Well—" said Mr. Woods.

"Oh—please be careful, dear," said Mrs. Woods breathlessly.

"How do I know it'd do all right?"

Mr. Woods asked.

Joe waved a hand towards the door from beyond which there came, muffled, the music of the band.

"This one's doing all right, isn't it? You can see that straight off. But of course, if you feel like taking the proposition seriously, you've a right to know all the ins and outs of this place first."

"I think," Mrs. Woods said firmly, "the money ought to go into the bank."

Joe leaned towards Mrs. Woods and tapped the arm of her chair impressively.

"My dear lady," he said, "an investment of the kind I'm offering your husband would put you both on easy street for the rest of your days, and without touching the rest of your money. Invest a little, and bank the rest if you like."

For a moment Mrs. Woods seemed to hesitate. Then, tremulously, but still firmly, she said:

"I should feel happier if it was all in the bank."

FOR the next quarter of an hour or so, Joe addressed himself to Mr. and Mrs. Woods as persuasively as he could, and they listened with such respectful attention that he began to feel sure his sales talk was working. But then Mr. Woods suddenly said:

"Anyway, we're on holiday for the weekend, and I'll not spoil it for the missus by talking business."

Joe cursed inwardly, but he smiled pleasantly enough.

"You don't think we might have another little talk tomorrow?"

"Mr. Larman, sir," said Mr. Woods with dignity, "we're respectable, church-going people. We don't work Sundays."

"No. Of course. Well—how about Monday?"

"Well, we're leaving Monday afternoon—"

"How about the morning?" Joe asked. "I don't know. We might manage that, but we won't have much time."

With that Mr. Woods got up. He hesitated a moment, and then appeared to yield to some temptation. He took his wallet from his pocket and produced a cheque which he held out to Joe.

"Just to prove I did win it."

Joe took the cheque, permitted himself a glimpse of the magic figure £50,000, and then gave it back to Mr. Woods with every appearance of casualness.

"My dear boy," he said. "I never doubted you for a moment."

Joe had sense enough, however, not to try to talk any more "business" with



"What did we ever do to Uncle Percy to make him send Billy that for Christmas?"

them that evening. And on the following day, which was Sunday, he never even saw them. He didn't really like letting them out of his sight for so long, but he felt fairly certain they would turn up on the Monday as they had promised.

They did, and when they arrived at Joe's office, they found a suave, very well-dressed and very polite young man there, too. Joe introduced him.

"I'd like you to meet Mr. Brownlee. He's the gentleman I was telling you about who is willing to put up the other ten thou. And now, shall we sit down and talk it over?"

ALTHOUGH Mr. Woods appeared to be quite willing and moved towards a chair, Mrs. Woods remained where she was, and suddenly looked very unhappy. Then Mr. Woods caught sight of her, and he, too, seemed to become confused.

"Oh, er—I'm sorry," he said to Joe. "I just remembered I promised to buy the missus a fur this morning. We saw it Saturday after the shop was shut. I promised her we'd go along today."

Joe managed not to explode. He said smoothly: "Couldn't Mrs. Woods go now alone?"

"Oh, no!" Mrs. Woods cried, alarmed at the mere suggestion that she should expose herself to the perils of Oxford Street without an escort.

"Perhaps you'd go with Mrs. Woods, Mr. Brownlee? After all, you are familiar with everything we shall discuss."

So Mrs. Woods, highly excited, left with Mr. Brownlee, and Joe and Mr. Woods settled down to discuss Joe's proposition. Mr. Woods was very vague, however; said he didn't like making decisions in his wife's absence, and finally declared, infuriatingly, that he couldn't make any kind of decision, anyway, until he'd had a week to think it over. He'd be back in London the following Friday, and then he would give Joe an answer. And with that Joe had to be content.

When Mrs. Woods returned an hour later, she was radiant. She was wearing her fur, which made her costume look shabbier than ever.

"Look, dear. Isn't it wonderful?"

She paraded in front of her husband. "And, dear—Mr. Brownlee bought it for me."

"But—" began Mr. Woods. Before he could say any more, however, his wife had handed him an envelope from her handbag.

"Here, dear. I must give you these

tickets before I do anything else. I've been so stupid, but Mr. Brownlee's been so good—"

Mr. Woods obviously didn't understand, but he put the envelope into his pocket. As he did so his wife looked at her watch and cried out in alarm:

"Oh, dear! Now we've missed the train!"

"Oh, I don't think so," Joe interposed. "There's still a quarter of an hour, isn't there?"

"But it will take us—"

"My car is outside. We'll be there in plenty of time if we leave now."

Joe sat between Mr. and Mrs. Woods in the back of the Packard, with Mr. Brownlee and the chauffeur in front. The car rolled smoothly towards Paddington. When it was nearly there, Joe made a little speech, and a little presentation.

"Just a trifling gift for you, my dear Mrs. Woods," he said.

Mrs. Woods gazed wonderingly at the little black box which had found its way into her hands. Slowly she opened it. Then she exclaimed breathlessly:

"A ring! A diamond ring!"

"A little token, nothing more. And—Mr. Woods. If you'd accept this, I'd be grateful."

Mr. Woods found himself holding a gold cigarette case. He fingered it awkwardly, and then, clearing his throat loudly, said: "Mr. Larman, sir—you

## THE HUMAN MACHINE

### Quite Ordinary

SOMEONE was described to me the other day as being "quite ordinary." It seemed meant as a sneering reference, a sort of contemptuous dismissal.

Yet, to my mind, to be "quite ordinary" is something to be proud of. The quite ordinary man seems to me to be someone who minds his own business, gets on uncomplainingly with his job, fits in anywhere and everywhere, is unassuming and friendly and helpful.

We've seen enough in our lifetime of people who couldn't possibly be called "ordinary." I, for one, don't admire abnormal people very much.

Love, hope, faith: these are "ordinary" virtues—but they make an accolade which any of us can be proud to receive.

by ROFFE THOMPSON

shouldn't have done this. It makes me feel very—well—"

Joe waved a hand easily.

"A little gift," he said. "A little something in advance on what I hope will be a very congenial business partnership."

He turned to Mrs. Woods.

"You will allow your husband to consider my little proposition, won't you?"

Mrs. Woods was now quite vanquished. She said: "Oh—we couldn't possibly let you down now, could we, dear?"

The car arrived at the station and Joe and Mr. Brownlee escorted Mr. and Mrs. Woods to their train. The chauffeur followed with their meagre baggage. There was just time for final goodbyes and an assurance by Mr. and Mrs. Woods that they would return on Friday, and then the train pulled out.

As he was still waving goodbye, Brownlee laughed and said:

"What a dope! D'you know, she thought she was going to buy a fox fur for about thirty bob?"

"What happened?" Joe asked sharply.

"Why, I bought it for her. That's the way you wanted it, isn't it?"

"Right. If you're going to do a thing, do it properly! That's why I gave her a chip of real ice and not a hunk of paste."

Brownlee laughed again.

"Well—she did it properly, although she didn't know it. At least, she hit on the most expensive fur in the shop."

"How much?"

"Forty quid."

Joe shrugged his shoulders. Forty pounds was neither here nor there—not, at any rate, when you had the prospect of collecting ten thousand.

"It wasn't easy to get her to buy the dam' thing at all," Brownlee went on.

"First of all she said it was too expensive. Then she said she'd put her own money towards it. Then, when she opened her bag to get her two or three quid, she found she'd lost her old man's and her own return tickets."

"What then?"

"Oh—we stopped in at a travel agency, and I bought her some more. Returns. You want 'em back, don't you?"

"Yes."

Brownlee chuckled.

"Even then," he said, "she nearly had a fit when I bought first class."

MEANWHILE, in the toilet of the swaying train, Mr. Woods was scrubbing his hands. When he had finished he dried them carefully, looked in the mirror and ran a hand over his hair and grimaced at himself. Then he went back to the compartment where he had left Mrs. Woods.

She was sitting in the far corner, smoking. The cigarette in her hand bore liberal lipstick stains. As Mr. Woods came in, she said:

"Well—it certainly feels good to get something on my face again! I haven't felt so naked for years as I have done this weekend."

Mr. Woods smiled slightly but did not answer. He sat down on the seat opposite and stared at the fur, which was lying by Mrs. Woods's side. Then he took from his pocket the cigarette case Joe had given him and threw it on to the fur.

"Gold-filled," he said. "Not worth much."

His wife drew off the ring and added that. Then Mr. Woods said: "Might get seventy quid for the lot, so it hasn't been too bad a weekend."

A little later he took from his wallet the £50,000 cheque and the two first-class return tickets which Brownlee had bought. He threw the tickets on to the fur, and said: "Since we're getting out at Reading, we ought to get a good refund on those. We will on the return halves, anyway."

The cheque he tore up into small pieces and dropped out of the window.

# BUDDING DICTATOR OF 1949

by WILLIAM ARMSTRONG

De Gaulle is dangerous. He seeks power this year, isn't fussy how he gets it, and admits it may bring civil war

ONE DAY not so very long from now, General Charles de Gaulle expects to leave his country house in the village of Colombey-les-deux-eglises to drive the one hundred and twenty miles to Paris, there to be received by the President of the French Republic and asked to form a Government.

De Gaulle himself says he will come to power soon, either by the free vote of the French people or when "the pressure of events imposes it." Many of his followers are more definite. They say he will be in power in the spring.

Today, at fifty-eight, *Le Grand Charles* is much the same exasperating problem as he was in 1940: a great man to some, a power-seeking adventurer to others, an enigma to all.

Britain remembers him as the starchy leader of the Free French—Churchill's "cold and difficult fish"; America sees him as the strong-arm man, the super boss who will stand up to the Communists. To the Communists he is the Devil; to Catholics he is the Defender of the Faith.

What is he to Frenchmen?

To half of them he is the symbol of French regeneration: the man who will restore authority and order, and put an end to insecurity and corruption. To the other half he is merely the latest in a long line of anti-republican blunderers, a militarist whose coming means dictatorship, anarchy and civil war.

## A Million Communists

The Frenchman has seen ten governments come and go in the space of three years. He has seen his leaders, men of all parties, play a bitter game of politics while France passed from crisis to crisis—to be left almost without voice or authority at a crucial moment in the history of Europe and the world.

He has in his country a well-armed and militant Communist Party numbering one million, the largest and most highly organized outside Russia; and the Red Army itself, in de Gaulle's phrase, is only "two days' bicycle ride" from the frontier.

The Frenchman is faced with rocketing prices, a falling franc, a flourishing black market, a hoarding peasantry, and a government apparently unable to do anything about it.

De Gaulle has all the answers. He speaks to France in the triple rôle of prophet, analyst and saviour. But when the smoke of his oratory has cleared away, de Gaulle's appeal feeds on the same agonies that sustain the Communists: fear and fatigue, insecurity and despair.

The fear of Communism in France is so great as to cloud the judgment of many intelligent Frenchmen about the consequences of de Gaulle's accession to power. "Let him clear up the mess, restore stability and oust the Communists; then we will get rid of him," said a French lawyer to me this summer.

It is a dangerous delusion, and we know all too well where it leads. For

de Gaulle, in spite of his insistence that he stands for the democratic way, will mean some form of authoritarianism. He will be forced, by liberal opposition and Communist attacks, to take measures which will be backed by force and not by the will of the people.

That he has anticipated such measures is not in doubt. He is said to have a "private army" of fifty thousand men. His party, the Rally of the French People, has money, prestige, and is brilliantly organized in every important centre of France and North Africa.

In a speech at Grenoble he clearly stated his readiness to resort to extra-parliamentary action and the use of "resistance methods to revive a falling republic."

## He Wants Action Now

De Gaulle is ready to fight and expects to fight. The enemy will be the Communists. If they fight back, as they will, the result can only be civil war.

The consequences of civil war in France are incalculable. But de Gaulle—and this is one of his most dangerous beliefs—thinks that they need not be catastrophic. He holds, indeed, that it need never come to anything so serious if the Communist problem is faced now, and not deferred till later. He thinks that the Russians will not risk the cost of supporting the French Communists, and that, abandoned by Moscow, they will be effectively rooted out of France.

But he believes, too, in the inevitability of war with Russia.

If he manages to take the reins of government and hold them, what can his countrymen expect of him? He plans to enforce authority and a strong law. That will mean more police and less freedom; and Frenchmen, intensely individualistic, have never taken kindly to the increase in one or the shrinkage of the other.

He favours free enterprise and the abolition of controls. This, say his critics, will not only lead to economic disaster, but will mean social injustice that will inflame further the always bitter class war in France.

## It Might Tempt Moscow

What would de Gaulle's accession to power mean to us and to the rest of the world? It might mean something very terrible indeed. If de Gaulle is wrong in his belief that he can come to power without widespread civil war, the temptation for Moscow to make of France the fuse that will set off a wider and more tragic explosion may prove irresistible.

Internationally, de Gaulle professes to favour the Marshall Plan and the idea of Western Union, but in this it is difficult to assess his sincerity or his motives.

His attitude towards international affairs is conditioned primarily by his belief that France is the natural leader of Europe. During the war, he feared that the influence of the United States might prevent the realization of this dream. Now he fears Russia more and is eager for co-ordination of American, British



He poses as prophet and saviour. Many Frenchmen rise to the bait

and French action against Communism.

It is probable that the Americans would be glad to work with him. Their reluctance to share military secrets with the present French Defence Committee, for fear that its Communist members might pass on the secrets to Russia, would disappear with anti-Red de Gaulle in power. But our own Government, it is clear, wants as little as possible to do with him.

His accession to power could only aggravate the British and American differences about the organization of Western defences.

The situation is complicated still further by the general's references, vague as yet, to a Latin bloc: an alliance with Italy and Spain, within whose framework France, he hints, could be independent of British and American entanglements. He is encouraged in this unreal scheme by the signs—fostered by his charge that the Western Powers are rebuilding German militarism—of a nascent and violent French nationalism.

Divorced of his policy—or lack of policy—what sort of man is de Gaulle?

He is cold, aloof, difficult to like, and notably lacks those quirks of character which so often endear their public men to the French. But he has presence and a certain glum dignity that is impressive.

He is a worker; he is at his desk from early morning to late at night. His associates think him a man of brilliant abilities. The opinion is not shared by the professional politicians and industrialists.

"An amateur magnate, surrounded by discontented failures," was how a Parisian banker described him to me. Yet Andre Malraux, de Gaulle's political theorist and one of the most intelligent

writers in France, thinks him the greatest Frenchman alive.

The general's own hand-out of himself represents him as the solitary man of destiny, brooding on his country's ills. The almost mystical appeal he makes to the emotional facet in the French character results from his assumption, in 1940, of the rôle of symbol and repository of his country's honour.

I first saw him on the airfield at Casablanca in 1943. He had flown in for the meeting with Churchill and Roosevelt and, in the short delay before moving off, the allied officers gathered round the airport bar. De Gaulle stood apart and alone, studying a map—a map of France.

## Great-man Complex

If France turns to de Gaulle now, it will be partly from emotion and partly from her need and desire for authority. France has still the great-man complex, and in critical times Frenchmen have always turned to the authority of an individual rather than an institution.

The choice has generally been disastrous: the two Napoleons, Boulanger, Pétain.

When France has a cold, the proverb says, the world sneezes. Now, more than ever before, the destiny of France will colour that of the rest of the world.

There are signs that the danger is realized, and that the democratic front in France is closing its ranks against the perils of extremism. It is still possible that France will be able to put her house in order without the Communists and without de Gaulle.

All who love France—and that means all who love liberty—will hope that it may be so.

# DOES SLEEP P

by HARVEY GRAHAM, M.D.

Before you tell your doctor "you can't sleep a wink," try some of these commonsense cures. And above all don't worry about not sleeping—that can do you more harm than insomnia itself

**W**E NEVER WORRY about sleep until for some reason sleep eludes us. After that the sleepless progress follows a familiar pattern. Household remedies are tried and millions of sheep are counted.

A hot drink and a dull book is a well-known remedy for sleeplessness. Both are easily available and often effective. If they fail there are all sorts of tricks about relaxing one muscle at a time, making your mind a blank, reciting desperately "I will sleep, I will sleep," till to sleeplessness there is added exasperation.

This fruitless struggle goes on for a time. A visit to the doctor is the next step.

Patients who see a doctor about insomnia fall into two main groups. A worried-looking man represents one type. He will complain about his heart, his nerves, his blood pressure, his appetite and only reluctantly and unhappily mentions that he is "not sleeping too well." He seems to be rather ashamed about failing to perform such a simple function.

The other type is the woman who puts down her shopping basket and gives you most of the information that is needed in the first five words—"I can't sleep a wink."

They both mean the same thing. For some reason their sleep has changed from the normal to the abnormal. What is abnormal can only be understood in terms of what is normal, and so far as sleep is concerned there is a wide "normal" range.

## Eight Hours for Most

Somebody asked a thousand prominent men and women how many hours they slept. About sixty-five per cent said they slept eight hours; twenty-five per cent slept for less than eight hours, and ten per cent for more than eight hours.

Most investigators give eight hours as the average length of time for which normal adults sleep. But there are quite a few people who work happily on only five hours' sleep a night. There are as many more who are very unhappy without twelve hours' sleep a night.

Napoleon's habit of sleeping only four hours a night is rare, and the lady in Sweden who has been sleeping for thirty-two years is unique. She may, anyway, have been wiser than she knew to sleep through the last thirty-two years.

Generally speaking, women sleep lightly and are more easily awakened. Men usually sleep deeply and dream less.

The depth of sleep commonly increases with the length of sleep. The under-eight-hours people are light sleepers. Over-eight-hours people are deep sleepers.

Heavy sleepers often waken feeling

heavy and grumpy. Light sleepers often waken feeling refreshed and full of the joy of spring. They should remember that their sleeping partners—if they belong to the other group—may be feeling like death and wishing the smiling morn was still black night.

Sleep becomes lighter and often less with increasing age. Old people may have cat-naps in front of the fire in the afternoon, but they often sleep only five or six hours at night.

## All Day Long

A brand new baby sleeps practically twenty-four hours a day and wakes only to feed. Toddlers of two to four years want at least twelve hours' sleep, older children rather less, and ten hours is probably enough for the twelve- to fourteen-year-olds.

From the ages of fourteen to eighteen nine hours' sleep is about right. These are all general figures, with room for personal variations in sleep of plus or minus an hour.

It is very difficult indeed to keep a child awake if it wants to sleep. Keeping a child in bed and still when it does not want or need sleep is a much more common fault, and may lead to crying, restlessness, head-banging and even bed-wetting.

Adults often behave childishly. They find they can't sleep, argue that they are "not getting enough sleep," and go to bed earlier than usual. Restlessness



Light sleepers should remember their partners may wish smiling morn was still black

# PASS YOU BY?

follows and a state of irritability which might be relieved by banging the head against the wall but is not likely to increase the chances of a peaceful, easy falling asleep.

Insomnia, anyway, is a very individual matter. One particular man or woman sleeps less long and less deeply than usual. A woman who has been accustomed to nine hours' sleep and is getting only seven hours is suffering from insomnia. So is a man who used to sleep only six hours a night and now sleeps only five hours.

A woman who has switched from nine hours to seven hours' sleep will say she "can't sleep a wink." Her husband says "she sleeps more than she thinks," as if that solved the problem.

In point of fact, the psychological worry of being dissatisfied about sleep is often more important and more disabling than what may be a relatively small difference in the hours of sleep. More damage is done by worrying about not sleeping than by not sleeping.

There are three kinds of insomnia. Waking up too early in the morning and failing to get off to sleep again. Broken sleep with waking periods in the middle of the night. And difficulty in getting off to sleep.

One man told me he kept on waking at 6 a.m. when he wanted to sleep till 8 a.m. Cutting out his two-hour nap in the afternoon, to which he was accustomed, solved his problem.

## Churchill's Cat-nap

Winston Churchill deliberately exploits his after-lunch nap so that he can work effectively right up to midnight and beyond it if necessary. Sleeping in the afternoon is a sensible method of saving the same or more hours' sleep at night. Trying to have an afternoon sleep and a full sleep at night is asking for insomnia.

Most cases of waking too early are due to going to bed too early and not being sufficiently and healthily tired. Taking the dog for a walk every night cured an-

other case of insomnia, and was good for the dog, too.

Waking up in the middle of the night may be due to toasted cheese for a late supper, but may have a more serious cause.

Waking up with a fearful start—even to the extent of falling out of bed—seems to be due to a mixture of psychological and circulatory causes. Often such people imagine there are burglars in the room or the house is on fire.

## Legs Get the Jitters

Waking up with a start to find your legs are jittery or fidgety or you have cramp in your calves is much more often due to circulatory changes than to psychological causes.

These symptoms can be helped a great deal by treatment, but the treatment ranges from simple aspirin to complicated drugs like carbachol, and only a doctor can prescribe the right treatment for the individual case.

By far the commonest kind of insomnia is the type labelled "I just can't get to sleep at night."

The answer to most cases of this kind is very simple. Don't worry about it and don't pay much attention to it. You may perhaps be overtired or overworked. Problems of the past day and plans for the next day all mixed up in an overtired brain are potent causes of failure to get to sleep.

See that your bed and your pillows are comfortable. Have a hot-water bottle, but remember that it is to warm the bed and not to overheat your feet. That way lies chilblains.

Take a lazy, hot bath. A hot, milky drink of some kind is a good thing if you have the milk and if you have a young bladder.

The other equipment you need is a dressing gown for your shoulders and a good book. If you like "whodunits," then read a "whodunit," but try to arrange that you find out who did it and finish with the murders and the horrors before you put the light out.

And make sure the light you use for reading is a good one. Most of the bedside arty-crafty, so-called reading lamps would give a lighting engineer acute insomnia and a pain in the neck.

Read your book in comfort, smoke your pipe or cigarette if you want, and put the light out and go to sleep when the spirit moves you and not according to some arbitrary clock. Don't worry about not sleeping. Don't worry about the lateness of the hour. And you will sleep perfectly well.

That kind of commonsense approach cures most of the insomnias of this type. Other more difficult cases need treatment—probably by sleeping tablets. Barbiturates are the drugs most often used for this purpose, and notably phenobarbitone, the little tablets that the B.B.C. keeps worrying about when they are reported missing.

These drugs have their dangers, like any other drug or treatment, and that is why they must be prescribed by a doctor. But doctors only prescribe them for people who need them, and only in a dosage sufficient to produce the right degree of sleep without any dangers of poisoning, or even a hangover. Most properly prescribed sedatives can be taken for years if necessary without ill effect.

People have been killed by phenobarbitone, but then people have been killed by aspirin and by banana skins. The relative risks are about the same. Nobody is going to stop the supply of bananas because a few people break their necks slipping on the skins. Nobody is going to stop that blessed sleep that phenobarbitone can give to the bad cases of insomnia merely because a few people are either bent on suicide or are criminally stupid.

## Why They Sleep-walk

One other disorder of sleep deserves a mention. Sleep-walking is a curious activity about which very little is known. It was often seen during the war in cases of acute war neurosis due to experiences in battle.

A man would start out of his sleep, obviously terrified, and would shout orders, struggle, smash his fists against the wall, and show again all the horror he may have experienced in some incident that precipitated his neurosis.

In such cases the sleep-walking stopped when the neurosis was cured.

Sleep-walking is also seen in some of the more chronic anxiety states, but the manifestations are not so violent and the patient will respond to gentle but firm directions, and can usually be got back to bed still more asleep than awake.

Deep emotions may lead to sleep-walking. Desires and fears repressed while awake may be expressed when the conscious mind is asleep, and may find an outlet in the kind of drama Shakespeare depicted in the sleep-walking scene in Macbeth.

Less often, sleep-walking is either a hysterical symptom or sometimes it may be "faked" for purposes which soon become apparent. This last type of case is the kind the cartoonist, Peter Arno, draws, with a blonde, saying archly, "Sleep-walking again, Mr. Tiddlepush?"

There is, in fact, a complete range from sleep-walking completely asleep with no recollection of it, through sleep-walking half awake and half asleep with a vague memory of what happened, to "sleep-walking" while fully conscious as a hysterical phenomenon or as a "fake" performance to cover up some anti-social activity.

## Budding Napoleon, Maybe

Sleep-walking is, in fact, rare. Sleeplessness is not.

Waking too early can usually be fixed by adjusting your activities of the day and especially the evening before. Broken sleep, if it persists and happens regularly, requires a medical opinion and treatment.

Failure to get to sleep the moment you go to bed is much commoner and much easier to deal with. Before you go to your overworked doctor about it, try some of the suggestions I have outlined here.

Above all, don't worry about it. You may just be changing your sleep habits as people do, or you may even be growing up to be a Napoleon.

Finally, if you see your doctor's notes on your case-card don't be alarmed by such horrid phrases as "prolonged pre-dormitum" and "nocturnal jactitation." That is merely a pompous kind of medical shorthand for "takes a long time to get to sleep" and "wakes with a violent start and falls out of bed occasionally."



Head-bangers — they include babies who won't go to sleep and adults who can't



Cat-nappers who try to have an afternoon sleep and a full night's sleep just ask for insomnia



Sleep-maker. He takes a hot bottle, milk and bath; sleeps when spirit moves him



Drill night polish: H. B. Bennett travels twelve miles to the Territorials

## FREE SPEECH

**E**IGHT YEARS AGO, when I married, I went to live with in-laws in a new council house. The house was, and is, a disgrace. In less than six years a new floor was needed in the scullery, and there were many other defects.

A year ago, I received a house from the same authority, built by the same contractor. And again there's the same shoddy workmanship, leaking doors and windows, loose floorboards, cracks between walls and ceilings, badly built chimneys and lavatories, putty and paint peeling on the outside walls.

This house cost £1,400—a price that certainly calls for something better. Local authorities should, in the light of past experience, be more careful when choosing contractors.—P. P. (Full name and address enclosed.)

### Wanted to be a Miner

**I** APPLIED AT A LOCAL labour exchange about four weeks ago to volunteer for the mines. The official was unable to supply details but gave me an out-of-date booklet.

However, he promised to arrange an interview for me with a Coal Board representative, and took my telephone number in case I should be called upon at short notice. Interviews, I learned, were held twice a week at the Edgware, Middlesex, employment exchange.

Well, that was four weeks ago. I still haven't heard a word—not even an up-to-date pamphlet to keep my interest alive. Needless to say, I have found another job in the meantime. But why waste money on posters and advertising if the actual recruitment is handled in such a disgustingly incompetent manner? A. B., London, N.W.2. (Full name and address enclosed.)

### Aren't Nurses Workers?

**A**S A FIRST-YEAR STUDENT male nurse, I have been refused a shift workman's ticket by the Railway Executive and also by the Ministry of Transport, on the

unreasonable grounds that "nurses are not classified in the categories by which the railways define bona-fide workmen."

In view of the irregular hours and poor pay of all nurses in comparison with those entitled to cheap travel concessions, i.e. artisans, mechanics and labourers, it is high time this privilege was extended to include hospital workers. I have to travel twenty-two miles to the hospital.—MALE NURSE, Southend-on-Sea. (Full name and address enclosed.)

### Mothers Needn't Worry

**T**HERE HAS BEEN a good deal of fuss recently about young men being sent abroad for their period of military service. I can assure anxious mothers that they have no need to worry about the welfare of their sons.

I myself spent two years in France, Holland and Germany during my service, and I can honestly say that I would prefer to serve abroad any time. The majority of camps abroad are very well organized with plenty of sport, educational classes, well stocked libraries, and good food. It is entirely up to the man himself whether or not he enjoys it.—A. Lowcock, 26 Hendon Road, Nelson, Lancs.

### Only "Terrier" in Town

**I** AM IN THE EXCEPTIONAL position of being the only Territorial in this town. After six and a half years of war service,

I enjoy it very much, and attend every drill (I might say "club night") whenever possible, travelling twelve miles to do so.

My only objection is the niggardly remuneration. After many wrangles in the local chamber of commerce, our employers have decided to make up our wages to the basic rate of pay while we are away at the annual camp. But when my Army pay and my wife's allowance have been deducted, I am left with only a few shillings for the fortnight.—H. B. BENNETT, 8 Lancaster Road, Bewdley, Worcs.

### M.I.5

**I** AGREE WITH CLAUD MORRIS in his article on M.I.5 (JOHN BULL, December 11) that it is a necessary evil, but those in charge sometimes allow themselves to operate far beyond the bounds of common sense.

During the war I was myself victimized out of the Intelligence Corps by a special, inexplicable and unquestionable War Office order. There was no right of appeal, and I was soon back at my original/infantry unit where I spent several weeks as a permanent fatigue man. From then onwards, promotion was barred.

I could only assume that an M.I.5 investigator had reported me as unsuitable because I had exercised my citizen's right to attend political meetings of various parties, and because I had once helped to organize a discussion group. Certainly, foreign agents must be thwarted, but there should surely be some safeguard against the unjust victimization of loyal British citizens.—A. L., London, S.W.1. (Full name and address enclosed.)

### Our Food is No Joke

**T**HE SATIRE BY Ian Fox on hotel "service" (JOHN BULL, November 20) will not be appreciated by the National Council for Hotel and Catering Education, which, with the assistance of the Ministry of Education, sponsors courses in hotel and catering subjects at ten hotel schools and at seventy technical colleges.

There are now 2,000 students receiving training compared with 200 in 1944. We believe our efforts will soon make all these jokes about British catering out of date.—BASIL C. EDWARDS, Organizer-Secretary, National Council for Hotel and Catering Education, 185 Piccadilly, London, W.1.

### Parents Teach Hatred

**R**ECENTLY AT SCHOOL we were asked if we could bring old pairs of shoes which we had outgrown to be sent to German children for the winter.

When I asked my parents the reply was: "Certainly not. They started the war, and wouldn't have sent us shoes if they had won."

My friends had much the same reception. We discussed this attitude of our parents and felt ashamed that we could not persuade them to alter their minds.

It was not the German children who started the war and now have to suffer

its consequences, but their elders. It seems the present-day parent is quite content to let the youth of this country grow up with dislike and mistrust of former enemies.—TEENAGER. (Full name and address enclosed.)

### Documents in the Case

**A**FTER BUYING A CABIN fifteen feet by eight feet, I find that under the Town and Country Planning Act I am not allowed to erect it until I have filled in six forms and two books of forms containing six pages each. With these I must submit four plans drawn to scale. On top of this, I have to get the land surveyed.

This is really a bit too much! After all, I only want to put up a cabin, not build a factory.—FRANK SNAPE, 5 Withnell Fold, near Chorley, Lancs.

### Writers' Circles

**I**N HIS ARTICLE "Put Your Heart Into It" (JOHN BULL, December 11), Herbert Hodge suggested that aspiring writers should read a book called *Writers on Writing*.

Sound advice, but I would suggest something more: join one of the writers' circles that are now established in most towns. When manuscripts come back as regularly as you send them out, it needs lots of confidence to keep on writing. Writers' circles supply it, and make the novice feel less alone.—YOUNG WRITER, Portsmouth. (Full name and address enclosed.)

### What Makes Happy Marriages?

**O**NE OFTEN reads and hears of people who are happily married; very often, too, of those who are unhappily married. As a bachelor who hopes one day to make a successful marriage, I wonder what are considered the essentials to achieve it.—W. S. S. ROBERTS, 1 Lancresse, Bugle, Cornwall.



W. S. S. Roberts

Because of space shortage only a limited selection of the many readers' letters submitted can be printed. If your views are squeezed out, it does not mean that they have been overlooked by the Editor. For every letter used, John Bull pays one guinea. Letters should be marked "Free Speech" and carry the full name and address of sender for publication.

## THIS WEEK'S COVER

PICCADILLY CIRCUS, New Year's Eve. . . And because we can't all squeeze in, the cover by Gilbert Wilkinson takes us to it—and to the same old magic. Gay crowds, marooned cars, balloons, Scotsmen playing bagpipes, and Eros, on top, working overtime. A good or a bad year to come—who knows? Piccadilly, anyway, sends it off with good cheer

## OH, JOHNNY!



by TIM

# The jacaranda tree

by H. E. BATES

ILLUSTRATED BY K. J. PETTS

Intense heat; swarming refugees; and, somewhere behind, the Japs.  
Then, to cap everything, the startling decision of the two women

FOR DAYS MRS. BETTESON tends lovely Mrs. Portman, badly hurt in the car smash which killed both their husbands and Mrs. McNairn. Her struggle against the heat, her defiance of the vultures are in vain. Mrs. Portman dies before Paterson can reach them.

After a rest for Mrs. Betteson and Connie, who is running a temperature, Paterson drives on. The escape party from Burma, originally consisting of eleven people, is now reduced to six: Paterson, Connie, Mrs. Betteson, Miss Allison (the Eurasian nurse), Nadia (the Burmese girl) and her young brother, Tuesday.

In the back of the car, Connie feels very ill but is determined to stick the course—to stay with Paterson, to reach India with him. Somehow she must cheat the thermometer with which Miss Allison zealously keeps plying her.

They halt for the night. When Miss Allison enters the tent, Connie wonders how she can imply her love for Paterson. Her intention is checked by the sight of blood on Miss Allison's hands. Weeping, the nurse explains she has helped at a roadside birth—and the baby has died.

## PART VIII

### Appeal for Aid

THE Indian jumped on the car about noon the following day. He came scrawny out of the dust, like a starved spider. His dhoti hung about his lean dark legs like a deflated, dirty bag.

As the car came up, travelling at seven or eight miles an hour, he stood in the centre of the track, arms extended, as if he had been waiting for it to come.

Then, as the car went past, he sprang on the running board, gripping the handle of Paterson's driving door, gesticulating and wailing at the same time.

"What is it?" Miss Allison leaned forward. "What does he say?"

"Something about his wife I think. I can't get it. Do you speak Urdu?"

"No."

"I used to speak it," Mrs. Betteson said. "A few words, I mean."

The Indian clung to the car with one arm, waving frantically with the other. Wailing all the time, he writhed in the air as the car plunged at pot-holes.

"What does he say?" Paterson said. "I get the word wife, that's all."

"It's another baby," Mrs. Betteson said.

The car jumped a pot-hole and the Indian, half by accident, half in self-protection, fell off the running board. For a second or two he ran by the side of the car, lifting his hands, supplicating.

"What does he want?" Paterson said. "I can't stop here anyway."

The Indian was riding on the car again,

waving and wailing, his head in at the window.

"Push him off," Connie said. "It's the only way."

She remembered Indians in Calcutta: the wretched, moaning, miserable Bengalis, always grizzling and begging, always holding up their hands. The more you gave in to them the more you could.

"The baby's going to be born," Mrs. Betteson said.

"If we're stopping for every baby that's going to be born on this road we'll be here till Doomsday," Connie said.

"I'll get out," Miss Allison said. "Don't stop."

"Oh! why all the fuss?" Connie said. "If we hadn't been passing she'd have had it in the normal way."

"It's a propitious day. The stars are right. That's why."

Mrs. Betteson spoke with unexpected and firm direction, straight at Connie.

"Not our stars. That's evident."

"You should thank them," Mrs. Betteson said.

"I don't know what you mean."

"Just that you don't have to have your babies by the roadside."

"I don't have to have babies at all, thank you!"

Miss Allison at this moment opened the door and called to Paterson:

"If I'm not back you'll know I'm not coming back. Don't wait for me."

"We'll wait."

"No, don't wait."

"We're camping anyway and I'll come back."

"There's really no need."

"I'll come and look for you," he said.

"In about half an hour."

"No need? Goodbye."

Miss Allison jumped out of the car. The door swung back, hitting her box of medical supplies as she jumped away.

The Indian leapt off the running board at the same moment, and then Paterson leaned out of the window, looking back.

He did not answer Mrs. Betteson who, cut off by the back of the car from view, asked, "Is she all right?" nor Connie McNairn, who said: "I hope the stars are propitious for her, too, that's all."

Instead he was fascinated for a moment by Miss Allison. She stood briefly embalmed by the sulphury cloud of dust raised by the car, with her face no longer visible. She became anonymous, together with the Indian, against the green frame of smoky forest, the leafy edges of the frame glittering in the glare of sun.

And then the dust poured away. It seemed to shoot perpendicularly upwards, turning the sun to burning copper.

Edges of gilded light poured in from another angle and illuminated Miss Allison, who smiled as she lifted her hand, and the bony Indian, his chest of hollow ribbing like a leathery basket, as he smiled, too.

That was all. Paterson saw it all in

the second or two before he turned his face to watch the road. The sight of Miss Allison confidently smiling, quite serene, gave him a shock of pleasure, so that he smiled back.

He put his foot on the accelerator. "We'll camp and I'll go back," he said.

From the back seat Connie McNairn said: "How long do you suppose she'll be?"

"I see a place to camp," Mrs. Betteson said. "Isn't that a place? Over on the left-hand side?"

"I said how long do you think we'll need to wait for her?"

"I'll try to get in between the two rocks," Paterson said. "There might just be room."

"There's no shade there," Connie McNairn said. "Just rocks."

"Have to put up with it," he said.

HE pulled over and, as he stopped, felt the sun penetrate in an instantaneous

steely blow the roof of the car. Heat came pouring in at the open windows with stifling power.

He switched off the engine, felt very tired and then got out of the car and said: "Tuesday can put up the tent to give a bit of shade while I go back."

"I'm coming with you," Mrs. Betteson said.

"I should rest if I were —"

"I'm coming with you. Really."

He looked at her sharply. The broken left lens of her spectacles seemed to give her the most disarming sort of smile.

"All right. If you mean it."

"I do mean it" she said. "I just have to get a thing or two from my bag."

She had brought with her a sort of enlarged knitting bag of green fabric with a zip fastener and leather binding. Soon she reappeared with the bag itself in her hands.

"I'll take the bag. It's just as easy. She'll probably need a towel and it'll be cleaner."

"How long are you going to be gone?"

Connie McNairn said.

"Me?" Mrs. Betteson said. "I shall stay as long as Miss Allison stays."

"Don't wait for us," Paterson said. "Start eating. Have a good rest."

"In the shade, I suppose," said Connie. He did not answer.

Dutifully Nadia and the boy were going about the clearing, serene in the blistering heat between the enclosing rocks.

He watched for a moment how the girl slid about the dust, saying nothing. The flower was still unbruised below her right ear, like a huge ear-ring of fuchsia vermilion petals, and she smiled for a moment as he walked away.

Connie McNairn stood looking at him, too. Whether she was surprised or hurt or resentful or simply annoyed he never knew. She was not smiling; but in that moment he saw Mrs. Betteson already disappearing behind the car, using little

impatient skipping steps as she went into the road. He strode after her to carry the bag.

"No. I like carrying it. I like doing things. It can't be far."

Her steps, skipping with bursts of eagerness, took her more into little bouts of running. Once or twice, on the narrow foot-track between the jungle and the traffic of carts and bullocks and peasants and bundled trucks coming up the road, she was ahead of him by twenty or thirty paces.

Sweating already, he ran to catch her.

"This is no climate for running," he said. He took her arm.

"Was I running?"

"Something very like it."

He let go her arm and then, quite firmly, took the bag.

"Oh! no, really I can carry it."

"It's very hot."

"You're very kind, but I'm not hot at all."

"No?"

"I don't think I shall ever notice the heat again."

He did not answer. Already she was a few steps ahead and again he was striding out to catch her up.

By the time they found Miss Allison, ten minutes later, he was fifty or sixty yards behind her. The moment she reached Miss Allison she ran all the way back to Paterson. "The baby is born. I see the father holding it," she said.

"I'll have the bag."

Without speaking he let her take the bag. Once again she went on ahead to where, in the green shadow beyond the road, he could see Miss Allison's white dress. When she stooped she was screened from him by a mass of jungle fern.

PATERSON sat down some distance from the edge of the road, out of dust range, in shade under the trees. His shirt was wet with stains of sweat and he felt half exhausted.

And sitting there he saw Mrs. Betteson take the baby from the Indian, who squatted over against his fire, cooking something in a pan. The Indian now and then raised his face, casually, and Mrs. Betteson walked up and down. Absorbed, she swung the baby to and fro with extreme gentleness, talking. She walked up and down for five minutes before she saw Paterson sitting watching her, and then she came over to him.

Paterson remembered how propitious the day had been and said: "What's wrong with him? The father?"

"Nothing. It's what's wrong with the child."

"Is it —?"

"No," she said. "It's living. It's a girl, that's all. The day was very propitious and he hoped for a boy."

She had wrapped the baby in a towel. It was very makeshift, and against its

folded whiteness the puckered brown-red face was no larger than a doll.

Over by the fire the Indian had prepared his food and was eating it with his hands.

"So the day wasn't propitious," Paterson said.

"No. He's not interested."

"Is the mother?"

"If it had been a boy it would have been wonderful. Now she doesn't care either. The male child is what she wanted. The male child is the symbol. The male child could have made dozens of others."

**T**HE bitterness in her voice was profoundly softened by the physical pleasure in her face, the pleasure of handling the child, of succouring for a short time, in the stifling shade, the first moments of a life that was not wanted.

"I thought it was women who had babies," he said.

"Sometimes."

The bitterness hit him crisply in the face. She turned from talking to him to talk once again to the baby. As she did so she walked away. He felt small and foolish and wished he had not spoken.

He watched her walking up and down under the trees, between the ferns that still hid Miss Allison and the mother from sight, and then a bullock cart came up the road and he turned to watch that, too, as it passed. On the crest of its bundled baggage sat six or seven children, all Burmese, and one was weeping. He grinned and lifted a hand as the child went by, staring downward at him through grief-puckered Mongolian eyes, but the child did not cease crying.

And suddenly the sight of it recalled, and seemed to explain why, once, Tuesday had cried in the night. The child passing into the dusty distance on the road became suddenly for him the grief of a country.

In a day or two all of them would be out of it; and for Mrs. Betteson and Connie and himself and even perhaps for Miss Allison it would be at last the thing they had striven for and wanted. But it occurred to him for the first time that for Nadia and the boy it was not like that. Like the child on the cart they were going out into exile.

Thinking of it, he became aware of someone coming towards him through the ferns. He looked up, expecting Mrs. Betteson. But Mrs. Betteson was sitting down at last with the baby, and it was Miss Allison who stood there instead.

He stood up.

"All finished?" he said.

"All well and normal. Before I got here."

"Why did he panic and want you?"

"It was a propitious day and it was a first baby and he was very anxious. He wanted a boy."

"The day wasn't so propitious after all."

"No."

She gave a sigh and stood gazing at the road, her eyes tired. In her white dress she seemed, in the shadow of jungle, very frail.

"Shall we go back?" he said.

She stood absently rolling down the sleeves of her dress, still staring in front of her. The palms of her hands were turned upwards by the movement of her fragile arms. As she buttoned the cuff of first one sleeve and then another, her arms very beautiful in their extreme slenderness, he could not help wondering why she kept them covered.

Then she said, "I'm not coming back."

He did not speak.

"I've been thinking of it for some time."

"Yes?"

"I ought never to have left the hospital."

Over against the fire the baby cried

in a small way, and Miss Allison looked over her shoulder and back again.

"And then Major Brain went. I've never really felt the same since then."

Mrs. Betteson was walking up and down again, gently swinging the baby.

"You mean you're going right back?" he said. He spoke reticently. He understood the meaning of the decision for her and did not want to influence her, by argument, one way or the other.

She stared at the lines of refugees.

"Not right back; only to the camp where we were last night."

"I see."

"I could do good work there. There's decent water and I could organize things."

He felt suddenly touched by her fragility, the difficulty and strength of her decision and then by her youthfulness. In the same moment all of these appalled him. He felt inconceivably shocked by the idea of leaving her there on a road that was hardly a road at all, in the insufferably rising heat, without the facilities of ordinary decency and ordinary protection against God knew what was about to happen.

He felt the whole affair of the journey break like a rotten biscuit in his hands. Somehow he had to keep it from so grotesquely going to pieces.

"I think you'd do just as good work in India. God knows they're short enough of nurses there."

"No," she said. "This is my country."

If I've got a country."

"We're bound to reoccupy it. You can come back."

"It's sweet of you to argue," she said.

"But —"

"I'm not arguing, for God's sake!" he said.

"Please don't shout."

"I'm not shouting!" he said. "I'm merely saying that no man in his senses could let you do this!"

"Then please go out of your senses."

"Sometimes I think that's exactly what this damned trip will do to me!"

Little by little he had been raising his voice, not knowing he was shouting. He suddenly felt all the responsibility of the journey, fantastically aggravated by the behaviour of the four who were dead, and now newly and unnecessarily aggravated by the behaviour of Miss Allison, boil up to maddening fester in his head.

**P**ATERSON was checked in another bout of shouting by the arrival of Mrs. Betteson.

She rocked the baby soothingly up and down.

"What in the world are you shouting at?"

With great effort he calmed himself. He kept his eyes fixed on the red-brown eyeless puckered face of the Indian baby, of which he thought there were as many wretched replicas all over India as there were two-a-penny plaster Buddhas all over Burma, and said:

"Miss Allison wants to go back."

"That's understandable."

"Not to me!" he said. "You saw what happened when the Portmans argued me into splitting up."

"Yes." Dust from the road was already falling finely into the face of the baby, and with the corner of the towel Mrs. Betteson wiped a little of it gently away. "But it's not quite the same, is it?"

"It's worse."

Mrs. Betteson squinted up at him through the broken spectacles.

"I don't see it."

"All right," he said. "It's something I won't argue about. I'm just an ordinary fellow with an ordinary sense of decency and I just won't leave her to go alone. That's all."

"Must she stay alone?"

Once again she glanced up at him with an infuriating half-innocent gleam from

Miss Allison stood buttoning up the cuff of her sleeve. "I'm not coming back," she said to him. Paterson was speechless

her one good lens, so that he did not know whether to think of her as intelligently innocent or intelligently mad.

"That's what she proposes. That's what I don't like."

"I would like to stay with her."

For an instant the shock of Mrs. Betteson's remark expunged from his mind all his complete irritation. He realized that she was smiling at him. He wanted to exclaim flatly that she was as batty as everybody had always said she was, but he did not speak, and it was Miss Allison who said: "You see it's not quite as mad as you thought it was."

"No," Mrs. Betteson said. "There's two of us now."

He wanted to say: "Why don't we all stay?" but something about the cheapness of the remark deterred him.

**F**OR some moments no one spoke again and it was so quiet, the baby not crying as Mrs. Betteson rocked it gently up and down, that he heard somewhere in the deeper jungle a flight of paroquets break the trees with tittle-tattling voices and a fuss of wings, and farther away still a coppersmith bird tink-tinking in the heat with maddening monotony.

Then Mrs. Betteson, as if roused by the voice of the coppersmith bird, said:

"Of course, what I ought to have said was if Miss Allison will have me. I ought to have asked her."

Miss Allison smiled without speaking, and he knew that there was no need for her to answer. He himself spoke coolly for the first time.

"Perhaps the day was propitious after all."

They all laughed. Tension was broken completely as Miss Allison said: "The stars are always right for somebody. Today it's us."

"What about your things?"

"I have mine," Mrs. Betteson said.

He was aware of a new sense of humility and then Miss Allison said: "I've only a few things. In a grey case. I won't come back." Paterson said he would bring them himself or send the boy, but she said: "There's really so few of them that it wouldn't matter." She spoke simply, as if the formula for which neither East nor West could provide a solution had resolved itself at last.

"I'll come back," Mrs. Betteson said.

"It isn't far. I can carry the case. I can say goodbye to that lamb of a boy."

"He'll come back with you."

"I think Miss McNairn will be all right," Miss Allison said.

It seemed almost over. The mention of Connie seemed a triviality.

"You took her temperature last night," Miss Allison said, "didn't you?"

It was practically normal then."

"I did what?"

"You took her temperature. She said you stayed with her and took her temperature."

"No."

"I thought that's what she said. She talked a lot. I don't know—perhaps she didn't say it. I was very tired and upset and perhaps I wasn't listening."

"She's highly strung," he said.

Two minutes later he was walking on the road with Mrs. Betteson. After what had seemed the suffocating shade of the jungle edge the sun whipped down at him like naked flame. He felt it lick him callously on his bare neck. It caught his face as he turned to look at Miss Allison for the last time, stabbing blackly for a second at the retina of his eyes. It was as if the jungle had swallowed her up.

And then he saw her. His sight

cleared again and penetrated the yellow veil of glittering dust. With one arm she was holding the baby and with the other she was waving goodbye. As it waved slowly up and down, the arm seemed very slender and, against the darkness of the jungle, unbelievably pale.

"The only thing that bothers me," Mrs. Betteson said, "is the lens in my spectacles. If I lose it I shall be absolutely blind."

**A**s Tuesday joined the line of refugees to walk back to Paterson in the heat of afternoon after trotting behind Mrs. Betteson with Miss Allison's travelling case, he was in a state of stupefied unrest. Nothing in his experience could explain the fact of Miss Allison and Mrs. Betteson going back. He recalled that when the Portmans and Mrs. McNairn had gone forward in the other car they had done so in miserable anger. Now these two women seemed calm and happy.

Miss Allison had asked him to put out his tongue.

For a moment he did not understand.

"Tongue," Miss Allison said. "Tongue."

This." She put out her own.

He understood then and shot out his tongue full length, swiftly. Mrs. Betteson and Miss Allison laughed gaily.

"Wonderful," Miss Allison said.

"That's fine."

He kept his tongue hanging out for some seconds longer.

"That's all. Put it back."

Slowly he curled in his tongue and then stood waiting with bright eyes, the beginnings of a smile on his face.

Miss Allison held his wrist with her fingers and looked at her watch.

"Healthy as a monkey," she smiled.

He got the impression that the two ladies were playing practical jokes; the impression also that they were, in another sense, serious; that in the truest sense they were just starting on their journey.

He was still thinking of it when he came back to Paterson's car. The problem of it puckered his face, erasing the smile. For the last hundred yards or so before reaching the car he walked with his head slightly down, staring at the ground.

It was only when he heard the clatter of petrol cans at the back of the car that he came to life suddenly again. He saw then that Paterson was pouring petrol into the tank. Petrol was slopping over the mudguards, over the wheel and over the dust and he could smell the strong odour of it and see the quivering vapour of it in the hot air. He watched for a moment while Paterson, caught in the trembling curtain of vapour, slopped half a can of petrol away.

And he knew even before Paterson began shouting his name that it was not only the vapour of spilled petrol that gave him the appearance of convulsive trembling. He was a little drunk, too.



yawning apart and then slowly closing again.

She clung to the cord of the window with one hand and to the arm rest of the seat with the other. She wanted desperately not to plunge down into the repeated hollows of sickness and now and then she tried to defeat it by closing her eyes. It gave her only the ghastly effect of falling away into darkness that had no end.

As the afternoon went on she became more and more frightened of being ill. The only thing that comforted her was that she was alone in the back of the car. She could try to defeat the plunging dizziness without being seen.

She knew that she had gone beyond any lying about the thermometer. She did not need a thermometer now to tell her that her whole body was burning or that the sweat of it seemed to pour inwards through the flesh, running scalding and loose through her bowels.

Whenever she thought of Miss Allison she was shocked by Paterson's act in letting her and Mrs. Betteson remain behind. It seemed extraordinarily callous. It had also something to do with Paterson's getting drunk.

The drinking had begun quite suddenly when he had returned and sent the boy back with Miss Allison's bag. She had found him sitting on the running board of the car, pouring out gin by the half mugful. He had looked up at her and

said something that sounded very like "Cheers, damn you."

Then he had told her Miss Allison and Mrs. Betteson were not coming back. She felt suddenly very glad; and then, before she could prepare herself for it, bewildered and horrified.

"But you're not going to let them stay alone?"

"They want to stay."

"Yes, but that's monstrous. Leaving them there."

"They're leaving us. They know what they're doing," he said.

He sat with his elbows on his knees, the mug between his hands, and now and then he put his face into the mug.

"But I never even said goodbye. I wanted to say goodbye. Couldn't I go back?"

"Don't interrupt my meal," he said. The gin, in the terrific heat of noon, had worked itself quickly into his eyes. "Cheers."

"I don't know how you can sit there and not care about them," she said.

"I love them."

"You couldn't love anybody. You're just callous," she said.

"I'm just an ordinary bloke," he said.

He did not speak again, but something about the way he lifted the mug, plunged his face into it and then looked up at her sideways, ironically, disturbed her for the rest of the afternoon.

Whenever she looked up into the

driving mirror over the front seat she could see Paterson's face, tired, half drunk, watching her with that same ginfired irony until it became gradually part of the bewilderment of her sickness.

"Please, I feel ghastly," she said. "Please."

"What nice little lie are you thinking up now?" Paterson said.

She shut her eyes and lay back, too weak to answer. The word lie seemed to pin her down like a hot needle. She remembered her mother. She remembered how it happened, in the original event, that she had lied about Paterson. The fantasy of it had long since seemed so real that she had accepted it, as her mother had accepted it, as something true.

SHE remembered how she had wanted the meeting with Paterson to flower into something more than simple acquaintanceship. She had written her mother a long letter about it—the wonderful Mr. Paterson who was coming out on the boat before her, the new manager of the rice mill; the desirable and gallant Mr. Paterson who had taken her out to dinner; the considerate Mr. Paterson who had promised to come down to Rangoon to meet her.

She had worded it all so that it seemed as if Paterson was in love with her. She had wanted to contrive a situation of delicious romanticism, presenting her

mother with a predesigned affair, with something Paterson could not deny. She had put the onus of it all on Paterson and gradually the romantic illusion that Paterson loved her had become, for her, a reality. And Paterson, cornered by her lying into a situation that had seemed to him one of pure friendliness, had gone to meet her in Rangoon.

Her mother had never got over it. In a week Paterson had become and remained for her "that unspeakable man who toyed with my daughter's affections," and in a month Paterson, as if to confirm it, had taken up with this Burmese girl, Nadia.

It was all over and yet it was not all over, and now it came back to mock her. In another moment she knew that Paterson was not only drunk because of the act of Miss Allison and Mrs. Betteson, but because he understood, at last, everything about herself.

She felt the shock of it become part of her intolerable sickness, the hotness of windy dust choking her as it pressed into the car, the chasmic distances into which she was trying not to fall. She knew suddenly that whether Paterson believed her or not, she was very ill indeed.

She struck about with her hands, trying to grasp at the edge of the front car seat, so that she should not fall.

In another moment the heat proved too much and she lost consciousness.

*To be continued next week*

## WITH MY FEET UP

### Nice to Have Known Her

ONCE A YEAR I go through my old diary and transfer addresses and other necessary notes to my next year's model.

Now here, left over from 1948, is the note: "Kay, 2739." Kay? Yes, I remember her. We met at a party. . . . Glad to have her phone number. I'll ring her up some time. But what, oh what, was the name of the exchange? Hm, I'm hanged if I can remember. Ah, well, cheerio, Kay; nice to have known you.

On another page I find written: "Messrs. Fishman, College and Plank." Now, who on earth were they? Did they sell fish? Or colleges? Or were they timber merchants?

I don't know, so they won't get carried over to 1949.

Then, I suppose, somewhere about May or June, I shall want something odd like a new set of holes for a tennis net, and shall have forgotten the name of the suppliers, who are, of course, Messrs. Fishman, College and Plank.

"No. 136 High Street"—now who lived there? Was it that man who knew someone who knew someone who could wangle me some time—that is, if I were short? Anyway, I don't know the name of the town where the High Street is.

This year I really will stop making these half-baked notes and write out everything properly and file it in alphabetical order in a neat box on my desk. At least, that is what I hope.

### Hope for the Future

PROFESSOR WEED, the world-famous scientist and inventor of a method of waterproofing seaweed, has been at work on defence problems of the germ war. After months of experiment he has suc-



ceeded in producing a deadly gas which poisons germs in one-fifth of a second.

He is now seeking ways of preventing the gas from poisoning people, too.

### Snatch and Grow Rich

WHEN A GIRL recently appeared in court it was said that she had been living on the proceeds of stealing handbags.

Sorting through her loot must have become a trifle monotonous. A typical haul from one handbag no doubt went like this:

Handkerchief, shopping list, two penny stamps, bottle of aspirins, four used bus tickets, reel of cotton, grocer's bill, two letters, recipe for tomato fudge, three hair curlers, lipstick, compact with broken mirror, piece of tape, two snippings of curtain material, string, nail varnish, three buttons, broken pencil, small white tablet (composition forgotten), one shoelace, hat ornament, lucky charm and one and sevenpence farthing.

by Ian Fox

SEE THERE'S JUST TIME for me to come in at the eleventh hour of 1948 with what has now become my annual apology and note of thanks—my thanks to the readers who have written to me this year, and my apology to those I haven't been able to reply to personally.

A kind lady has just been sorting these letters out for me—gathering up the untidy heaps on my desk, collecting the bunches hung in clips on the wall, and assembling them in clean new folders, labelled with the subject they refer to.

The result of her labours is a sort of manuscript book, each chapter of which contains readers' opinions on the questions I've raised, week by week, during the year.

This book makes delightful reading. I've read each letter before, of course, when I first received it. But to look through them again, now that they're assembled in order, is like going to a party and meeting a crowd of intimate friends, all gathered together in one place.

I say "intimate" because so many of those who write to me seem to have the power of putting themselves into their letters—from the chap of seventy-seven who describes himself as having "one foot in the grave and one in the pub" to the young Conservative of seventeen who says he always finds my articles amusing but warns me that, politically speaking, they "let in the wet." How each phrase expresses each man's character!

Most readers seem content to accept me at my own valuation—as one who is simply trying to add his mite to the general discussion, rather than trying to lay down the law or win an argument.

Even the most critical letters are usually friendly; while the complimentary ones are the kind that warm the cockles of a man's heart.

I get very little fan-mail, in the usually accepted sense of the word. Unattached females certainly don't seem to fall for me. Most of my woman correspondents are married, usually mothers of families; or women school-teachers, or welfare workers.

What that proves, I don't know. I like to think it means that my ideas appeal to women of ripe experience and judgment. But it may be simply that these kind and motherly women feel sorry for me—feel I need a bit of sympathy and enlightenment.

### Even a Telling-off

Every letter, whatever it says, means a great deal to me. No writer likes to feel he's writing in a void. And all writers are afflicted at some time or another with doubts of themselves—a feeling that what they're writing will never be of any use, or any interest, to anybody.

Any kind of come-back, therefore, helps to cheer a man up—even if it's only a raspberry. He does at least



Many readers have the power of putting themselves into their letters

## Thanks for writing

by HERBERT HODGE

know that someone's been reading him.

Besides, I find it impossible to feel solemn all the time. I'm like the chap who once told the famous Dr. Johnson that he also had thought of becoming a philosopher, but found, to his dismay, that "cheerfulness will keep breaking in."

### I Gloat Over Them

When cheerfulness breaks in on me, there's nothing I enjoy more than a real right raspberry sort of letter. It provides such an excellent opening for a cheerful article.

That's probably why I so often rush to quote a raspberry in print, and leave the complimentary letters unmentioned. I prefer to treasure the complimentary ones in private.

Like a miser, I gloat over my secret hoard. They are the evidence that, in the minds of one or two readers at least, I have succeeded in doing what I set out to do—helped to make some puzzling aspect of life seem a little less puzzling than it was before; and, to that extent, helped to increase our understanding of ourselves.

Several readers have suggested that I should gather these articles together at the end of each year, and publish them in a book. But I don't think that's a good idea.

A book of essays—especially such short ones as these have to be—makes

very scrappy reading. I like a book to be a continuous narrative, with a beginning, middle and end—so that it gets somewhere.

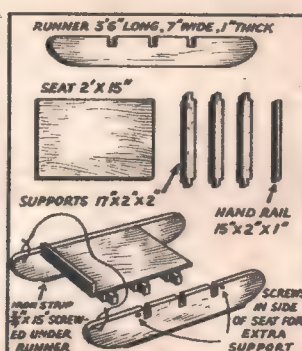
In writing these articles, I've touched on many topics that I want to deal with at greater length in my next book. Every article has brought in its quota of letters—letters which have often caused me to think again; and which, in any case, have widened my knowledge of what other people are feeling and thinking about these questions.

The book, when it is published, will, I feel, be all the richer for that experience. I've got a lot to thank my readers for, over the three years I've been writing on this page.

Not the least of it has been the new personal friends I've made, and the new sides of life I've seen, by accepting invitations in some of the letters, and meeting the people who wrote them. My only regret is that I haven't been able to do this more often. Every such meeting has turned out to be an important one—for me, at least. It's almost enough to make a man believe in destiny.

Meanwhile, three years older and possibly three years wiser, I hope, in the coming weeks, to write about some of the new ideas readers have given me. In fact, "What Readers Have Taught Me" wouldn't make at all a bad title for 1949.

## UNCLE ANDY



### A Sledge of Your Own



## Good thing I look after him!

Always rushing! . . . Still he isn't nearly so fagged out nowadays . . . stopped getting those awful colds, too . . . Well, they say there's more fat and vitamins in cod liver oil than butter . . . Glad I've got him into the way of taking that SevenSeaS!

Is anyone overworked or run-down in your household? Wouldn't it set your mind at rest to know that they were taking SevenSeaS?

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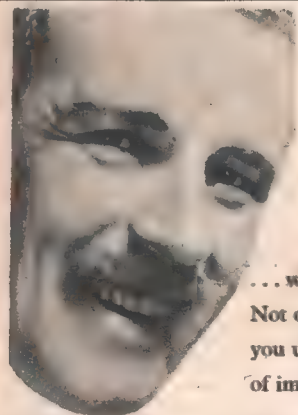
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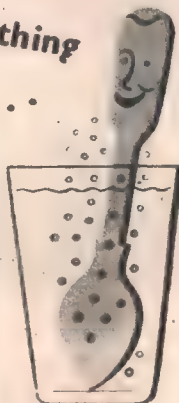
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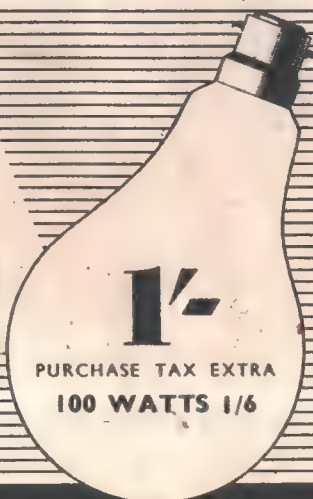
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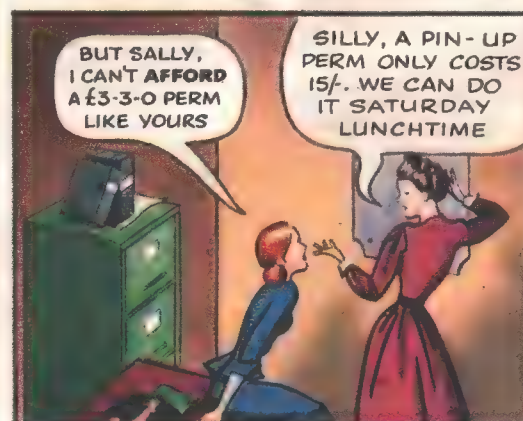


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It was no use trying to avoid an imp like Elsie. When she was after a man, she went in—guns blazing

**W**HEN LANCELOT LAKE arrived for the season, I threaded my way through the white dust-sheeted stalls and looked up at him. "I'm afraid I don't know your name," I said.

He bestowed it on me like a tip. I was overcome. "I'm awfully sorry," I said. "I didn't know."

He bowed his head like a Persian cat, sat down and gazed loftily at the boxes. "Why should you?" he replied.

I thought how nice it was of him to be so modest, until I realized what his tone had implied: "Why should a thing like you know anything?"

From that moment I hated him; and soon all the rest of the company did, too. Well, the men did, anyway. Tall, dark and handsome he was; and knew it. We could tell that by the way he oiled his hair and wore his violet shirts; and by the deliberately devastating smile with which he did anything he was asked.

So we soon came to know the kind of man he was. All except Elsie. She had been on tour with him and knew him already.

What made things worse was his ability as an actor.

Give him a love scene even with Hilda Matilda, the cold, statuesque wife of our guv'nor, and she warmed and responded like a plant in the sun. Even Johnnie Turnbull, who had hitherto played hero rôles, and whose nose was seriously out of joint, played smaller parts all the better when on the stage with Lancelot Lake. Yes, even on the day when he discovered his girl Marguerite on Lake's knee at the back of the stalls during rehearsal.

As for Elsie, despite the way she ran Lancelot down to the other women in her dressing-room, she played like an ingénue to him—and would come off-stage chewing her lip for having done so.

One evening, before her last entrance, Elsie climbed up beside me in the prompt box.

"Charlie," she whispered, "you've got to help me."

I was on the book, but it was Friday, and everybody was pretty safe on their lines. "What to do?" I asked in that habitual undertone of the prompt box.

"About Lancelot. He's stealing Marguerite from Johnnie. Haven't you noticed?"

"One of the many duties of an assistant stage manager," I returned, with more dignity than grammar, "is to notice who steals who from who."

"He's getting above himself," she said, glancing across at Lancelot Lake on the stage.

"Somebody's got to show him up; perhaps on the stage, for example. There's lots of things can go wrong if you let them." She turned her innocent, large blue eyes full on me.

"No," I said.

"Couldn't you give him the wrong prompt, or something?"

"No," I said. "And you wouldn't want me to. Neither would he give me the chance. Never dried in his whole life, he says. Says nothing can ever put him off."

"Does he so, the boaster?" Her big eyes had a funny look in them. "But indeed!" She fell a-thinking.

But her entrance was getting near, so,



As the cannon fired, Lake stepped aside and Johnnie caught the blast full on the seat of his breeches

## CURTAIN CALL

by Joseph Macleod

ILLUSTRATED BY STANLEY HERBERT

demurely, she thanked me for not being able to help her, and left. I heard her asking Walton, the electrician, about his three-year-old kiddie, who had taken the family radio to pieces and liked getting electric shocks.

Meldrum being a university town, we once a year burlesqued a Victorian melodrama, with fancy scenery, maudlin ballads and exaggerated acting. This year it was a naval melodrama, with a grand finale of the engagement between H.M. Frigate *Bellerophon* and the pirate galley.

As I was climbing up to the box for the last performance, Walton grinned at me: "Fireworks tonight, eh?"

"No nonsense, now!" I warned him.

"I've filled Mons Meg to the brim." Mons Meg was a semi-practicable property cannon. "Lake wears white pants," he whinnied.

Then seeing the look on my face, he covered himself. "I'm allowed to use up my spare gunpowder for the last house."

I had to warn Lake. One of our burlesque tricks was to reverse the parts, so that the villain was much better looking than the hero: and Lake was the Pirate King. He was supposed to be killed by his repentant and mutinous crew turning the cannon on him, while Johnnie Turnbull and a swarm of British

tars clambered all over the set, amid loud huzzas, to rescue the swooning heroine (Marguerite) in the nick of time.

Actually, as the firing of the cannon was a bit tricky, this was done by Walton himself, dressed as a pirate. His job was to swivel Mons Meg round at Lake and make the necessary electrical contacts. If he had troubled to warn me like this, it was going to be a mighty big bang.

But Lake just laughed indulgently, as he dabbed brown powder over his make-up. "My dear fellow, but let him have his little game, if he wants it. Your electrician can't make a fool of me."

**N**OR did he. At the end of the play that night, exactly as Walton fired, Lake took a couple of steps upstage, so that Walton caught Johnnie Turnbull in full blast on the seat of his lieutenant's breeches.

Johnnie, with a wail, flew a couple of yards, tripped on some rope, somersaulted overboard and sat firmly on the sea. The audience shouted with joy, and then burst into rounds of applause to see the popular Pirate King gracefully dying from a shot that hadn't hit him.

Meanwhile the cast had swarmed up the rigging and burst into the finale; but it was a hopeless anticlimax. The curtains swung to.

When they opened again for calls,

there was a whale of a laugh from the entire theatre. For there, still sitting on the sea, sitting on what looked like a burning raft, was the outraged Johnnie. He couldn't get up. His breeches were smouldering.

The dressing-rooms were in revolt that night. Elsie fed their fires. Most of her venom fell on me, while Johnnie talked of reporting me to the manager.

I held my peace. But I kept my eyes open. I didn't quite understand why Elsie never uttered a word of reproach to Walton.

Nothing happened next week; but the Monday after that, the first night of a sort of expressionist play, I saw that something was up.

The play had a lot of short scenes which we were playing on a number of rostrums stuck about the dark stage, lit by separate spots as required.

Lancelot Lake had a long part. He was a young scientist who had discovered a way of directing the cosmic rays so that they can explode any form of offensive armament. Vested interests try to explode him. They kidnap his fiancée; and so on. The script was full of sinister voices putting through unidentifiable telephone calls, all done on the dummy stage receivers.

The play was going with a zip: a really gripping drama. Lake had won all hearts; the entire audience was panting for him to rescue Elsie and win a fortune to boot. Then, towards the end of the second act, I thought I saw from my prompt box, a number of people gathering in the semi-darkness behind the velvet curtains.

Putting my finger down to keep my place in the book, I stared. There certainly were people: almost the whole company. Watching.

The act ended with Lake leaping on a rostrum, grabbing a telephone and ringing the Prime Minister to say that a

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1. First Prize to best *Bullet* received, others in order of merit—the test is of cleverness, aptness and originality.
2. Editor undertakes that all *Bullets* received shall be accorded careful consideration by competent Adjudicators.
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4. Entries accepted by post only and on condition that results of this week's Contests in JOHN BULL dated January 29, also Editor's decision in any matter of dispute, are accepted as final and legally binding.

### XWORD 611 ACROSS

WINNING WORDS. ACROSS: 1. Mated. 4. Poet. 8. Yap. 11. Gorse. 12. Meat. 14. Baker. 15. Sound. DOWN: 2. Tens. 3. Drunk. 5. Topple. 6. Big. 7. Fire. 9. Litter. 10. Boat. 13. Bed.

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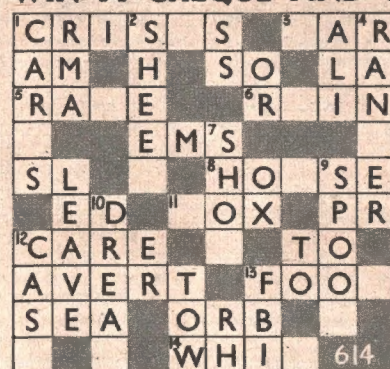
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First complete Square in INK, giving your Answers to Clues on right. Then, if you wish to enter one extra Answer to any one, two or three Clues, give each such word in full in "Extra Answer" Form below Crossword Square.

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In adjudication, all Extra Answers will be read in combination with each other and with all Answers in your Square. Thus your completed Square with one extra Answer to one Clue will represent two full Squares (Entry-fee 6d.). Square with one extra Answer to two Clues will represent four full Squares (Entry-fee 1s.), and Square with one extra Answer to three Clues will represent eight full Squares (Entry-fee 2s.). Use ink, not pencil. Single Square with 6d. P.O. or stamps covers dispatch to you of *Crossword* Gazette dated January 22. Winner—sender of most meritorious set of Answers received—decided by Adjudication Committee on basis of aptness and accuracy. Ties divide. Entrants limited to one prize per Contest and to entry requiring not more than 4s. entry-fee. Signature below is agreement to Rules.

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CURTAIN CALL: from page 21

message from Ecuador had arrived. Professor Martinez had just made the same cosmic ray discovery.

He got as far as "Get me the P.M. at once. Hallo, is that you, P.M.?"

A voice in his ear from the dummy receiver said: "Number, please?"

I could hear Elsie's voice saying it from the switch room behind me. Walton must have connected a hand microphone to the stage.

Lake plucked the receiver from his ear as if it had bitten him.

"Hallo!" said Elsie.

Lake said: "What?" rather feebly. The audience was dead quiet.

Elsie had no mercy. "Lance, darling," she said firmly.

The audience, sensing something was wrong, began to titter. Lake panicked. "Elsie!" he moaned, incredulously, and slammed the receiver down.

Elsie was ready for that. At once the bell rang, and Lake had to pick up the receiver again. He had a haunted look.

"Darling," Elsie started, "aren't you ever going to let us make things up? I'm sorry to do this to you; but if you will avoid me, it's my only hope."

"I say, look here," Lake mumbled.

"Will you wait for me at the stage door after the show?"

"Where—where are you speaking from?" Lake made a valiant effort to gag himself back into a "stage" voice.

"Will you? Yes or no?" said Elsie.

"Yes, darling, of course I will. Only get off the line. Hallo! Hallo!" He jiggled the bar. "Get me the P.M."

It was a brave attempt; but it was too much for the audience. The vibrant message to the Prime Minister was greeted with joyous hoots and whistles.

Lake didn't wait for the curtain. He leapt into the wings and caught Elsie slipping from the switchroom.

"Come outside," he said grimly. "I've quite a lot to say to you, young woman."

It was a long interval; but it took me all I knew to get them back for the last act.

Next day they announced their engagement. Lancelot was grateful to me. "We were engaged before, at Sheffield. But we came unstuck at Llandudno. Elsie says we'd still be unstuck if you hadn't refused to help her."

"S right," said Elsie. "Nothing like public obstruction to make a desperate woman achieve her private ends."

"And," Lancelot went on, "as we want to get beyond the reach of telephones as soon as possible, will you be my best man?"

I said I would. And I was. In fact, I was in much demand, for Johnnie, too, asked me to be best man for his marriage to Marguerite.

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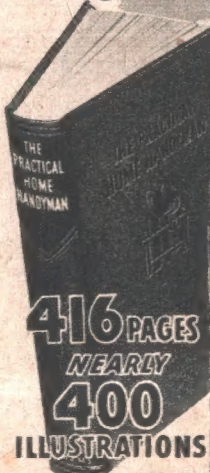
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THE WASH...



IT GETS WHITES WHITER WITHOUT BLEACHING!

**Y**OU see what Mrs. Nash says, lady? Well, she's only one of many. Thousands of housewives are asking for this wonderful new Super Oxydol now. Why? Because they've found in actual use, that the new Super Oxydol gives nearly twice as much lather. Does nearly twice as much washing, too. And they've proved for themselves that only Super Oxydol has this amazing new power.

There's lots more about this new Super Oxydol. First, it contains no bleach or harsh chemicals of any kind. Then, its amazing new kind of lather goes on easing out every last possible speck of dirt until your whites are whiter than they were ever washed before. Colours brighter, too. And it's so gentle your clothes last wash after wash. Make sure you ask for Super Oxydol first every time.



**NEW SUPER OXYDOL**  
Gives more lather... contains no bleach!



**GOOD NIGHT!**

CHECKING endless bills of lading,  
chasing up belated consignments,  
answering a telephone that never



**GOOD MORNING!**

stops ringing—she's doing a key job for Britain in a busy export office. It's one mad rush all day long but, like so many people who are hard at it, she finds that a steaming goodnight cup of Bourn-vita helps to bring her restful sleep and renewed energy—and that's what we all need to keep up the effort demanded of us today.



★ CADBURYS ★

**Bourn-vita**

For extra effort—extra energy!